



Today. Tomorrow. Together.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

- Key Implementation Strategies
- Cost and Phasing
- Detailed Implementation Plan Tables

Implementation Plan

The heart of the Acton 2020 Plan is the Implementation Plan that is presented in this section. It has been developed in order to achieve the Plan's vision and goals. It consists of strategies comprising one or more action steps under each of the seven goals and their objectives.

The Implementation Plan is organized by goal and objective because this most clearly shows how the proposed action steps relate to the things Acton residents have said they want.

The following section on Cost, Phasing, and Financing discusses relative costs and the potential to phase these action steps for financial feasibility.

The many other action steps are intended to be implemented over the next 10 to 20 years by Town staff, Boards and Commissions, and other citizens as opportunities arise and staff resources permit.

In addition to the following pages of this printed Acton 2020 Comprehensive Community Plan, the Implementation Plan is also an **online database** that can be viewed and searched at <http://implementation.acton2020.info/>

The Implementation Plan is a program for Phase III of Acton 2020, in which the action steps are

Priorities: The 2020 Plan has assigned priorities to approximately 40% of the 238 action steps, **38 highest priority** and **59 with second highest priority**; these are the things that are most important to accomplish.¹ Some of the highest priority actions involve significant expense, such as building a senior center or expanding the MinuteVan shuttle, and the most expensive actions includes wording like “as town finances permit.”²

Ripe Apples: In addition to the high-priority actions, there is a list of action steps that are **relatively easy to accomplish and have immediate benefits**, such as providing more bike racks or encouraging recycling and composting. These are called “**ripe apples**” and are listed in a sidebar in this section.

“Support” or “Continue”: Several action steps acknowledge **efforts** that are **currently underway**.

Sequence of Steps: The Implementation Plan is specific about what is intended to be done, and in many cases this requires a **sequence of steps**, e.g., do a Village Centers Plan to establish priorities, and then conduct place-specific design studies to develop guidelines for the priority areas.

“Explore” or “Consider”: In some cases it is not possible to be specific without further work, and words like “explore” or “consider” are used.

“Educate”: Several action steps involve the need to raise public awareness or educate people about the advantages or importance of individual initiatives such as recycling or energy conservation.

¹ The list of Key Recommendations on the following pages combines closely related action steps that in some cases are listed under more than one goal. This condenses the high priority actions to 15.

² The following section on Cost and Phasing discusses relative costs and the potential to phase these action steps for financial feasibility.

carried out. The Board of Selectmen should create an **Acton 2020 Implementation Committee** and charge its members with overseeing the implementation and upkeep of this plan as well as giving the Town annual “State of the Plan” updates.

Priorities and Owners

The 1998 Master Plan update had 143 actions organized under 12 goals. Approximately 70 percent of those recommended actions had been addressed in some way by the beginning of the Acton 2020 process in 2007.

The Acton 2020 Plan has 238 recommended action steps, each of which has a “lead owner” (i.e., the lead responsible party, such as the Planning Department), whose job it is to take the initiative and “other owners” (such as other departments, Boards, and Commissions) that need to be involved. All of the actions have been discussed with those owners.

The online database can be searched and sorted to create lists of actions for each owner.

Master Plan Elements

Although organized by goal, each action step is associated with one of the nine master plan “elements” such as land use, housing, open space, etc. Eight of these elements are traditional and are specifically mentioned in the state law that governs municipal master plans, and a ninth element, sustainability, has been added because it is not fully covered by the other elements. The Implementation Plan tables in the database identifies the main element and other associated elements for each actions step.

Ripe Apples (also called “Low Hanging Fruit” - low cost with significant benefit.)

- 🍏 Support the creation of a Kelley’s Corner Business Association
- 🍏 Recognize waterbodies as part of Acton’s heritage
- 🍏 Outreach to private historic property owners
- 🍏 Provide water education
- 🍏 Update private well standards
- 🍏 Educate regarding disposal of unwanted items
- 🍏 Create a Zero Waste Committee to promote recycling, reduction, and reuse
- 🍏 Provide recycling bins in public places
- 🍏 Reduce use of throw-aways
- 🍏 Improve Transfer Station waste reduction
- 🍏 Promote composting
- 🍏 Educate regarding unwanted electronics (e-waste)
- 🍏 Increase the number of local hazardous waste days
- 🍏 Promote use of non-toxic products
- 🍏 Educate and increase people’s awareness of the need to reduce their carbon footprint
- 🍏 Promote energy-efficiency upgrade programs
- 🍏 Leverage Green Communities grants
- 🍏 Discourage invasive plantings
- 🍏 Provide more bike racks
- 🍏 Update pedestrian and bike maps
- 🍏 Increase awareness regarding sharing the road issues
- 🍏 Publicize volunteer opportunities
- 🍏 Provide contact info for new residents to connect with organized neighborhood groups
- 🍏 Create one-stop reservations and calendar
- 🍏 Coordinate library services and community education
- 🍏 Involve teens in Town governance
- 🍏 Recruit volunteers from ethnic and language minorities
- 🍏 Form a technology committee
- 🍏 Complete long-range capital plan
- 🍏 Ensure financially efficient Town services
- 🍏 Supplement revenues with grants, fees, etc.
- 🍏 Explore regionalization opportunities
- 🍏 Create grants and funding clearinghouse
- 🍏 Develop a “Buy Local” campaign
- 🍏 Balance regulatory burden between public benefits and business needs

Key Implementation Strategies

The Goals and Objectives and Roadmap for Guiding Growth will be implemented through a number of strategies that involve one or more action steps. Fifteen key recommendations stand out as highest priority among the more than 200 proposed action steps. The full Implementation Plan is in the body of the report and online at <http://implementation.acton2020.info/>. They are not listed in priority order.

Roadmap Strategies for Guided Growth

► Guide Growth to Kelley's Corner and Villages

- Prepare a plan to improve Kelley's Corner and to **preserve and enhance village centers**. The **Key Centers Plan** will set priorities for new development and redevelopment in centers. The plan should consider Kelley's Corner and the villages as a system, build on existing strengths in each, identify necessary aesthetic and functional improvements, assess capacity for density incentives, and prioritize and sequence which areas to work on first. This plan would include a quantitative analysis of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) system, to verify which incentives are most likely to create the desired changes. The **Kelley's Corner Development Plan** will be part of the Key Centers Plan; it will provide the basis to proceed with zoning changes and infrastructure investments needed to begin the improvements at Kelley's Corner and promote development and redevelopment of key parcels as soon as practicable.

This action should be undertaken immediately to prepare for the

development of Kelley's Corner. The Kelley's Corner Development Plan component can be accelerated to expedite implementation.

- **Develop Kelley's Corner into a mixed-use Town center and transportation hub** in conformance with a specific plan for the area. Encourage mixed use with people living in smaller housing units near vibrant shops and restaurants with opportunities for socializing, running errands, dining, and community gathering. Creating more activities and a safe and pleasant pedestrian environment will also attract teens from the nearby school complex; they should be involved in the planning for the area.

This is a major part of the Roadmap. Similar actions may later be taken to accommodate more growth in some of the village centers.

- **Actively promote employment-oriented economic development** (e.g., Research and Development, high tech, office) to expand the tax base. This may also reduce commute time for some residents.



This is a major part of the Roadmap and helps to pay for a whole range of Town services by expanding the tax base. General locations are indicated in the Plan Concept map.

- **Protect, acquire, and improve open space** for conservation, farming, and recreation, using a combination of acquisition and zoning, including Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to move development away from open land and to the key centers. This will help protect Town character and the environment, as well as provide additional opportunities for recreation.

As Town finances permit, acquisition of open space can utilize revenue from an expanded tax base in addition to Community Preservation Act funds.

Other Strategies

- **Consider a sewer extension and/or advanced package wastewater treatment** with groundwater recharge in order to support an increase in small-scale commercial development and better manage wastewater in West Acton.

Extension of sewerage is a topic that needs careful study and discussion; package treatment may be a more cost-effective alternative for supporting village development, potentially with improvements paid for in part by developers.



- **Improve the transfer station to increase recycling and reuse.**

The Implementation Plan also encourages composting, and measures to address curbside recycling pickup by private companies.

- **Construct more sidewalks and facilities for safe bicycling, in centers and Town-wide.** This will help connect people and places and provide opportunities for fitness while also being beneficial for the environment (by reducing car fumes).

This action extends the current level of sidewalk construction and includes both bike paths and bike lanes.

- **Reduce energy use in Town buildings and promote Town-wide energy conservation.** Support joint community/Town efforts to reduce reliance on fossil-fuel energy sources and to explore shifting to renewable sources.

This action extends the current effort in energy conservation and use of renewable energy resources.

- **Develop policies and strategies to keep empty-nesters in Acton.** As the senior population continues to grow they will need a number of facilities and services that meet their special needs.

The type of housing envisioned for Kelley's Corners and the villages would help to keep more seniors in Acton.



- ▶ **Continue to fund, and later expand, MinuteVan** to build ridership with more frequent service between village centers, Kelley's Corner, and the rail station. This will connect various places in Town and also provide a service to those who cannot drive as well as to those wishing to use public transportation.

The shuttle is one of the key features supporting the Road Map. It enhances the improvement of Kelley's Corner and village centers and is an important part of environmental sustainability and improving connections.

- ▶ **Construct a new building to accommodate the Senior Center and larger community**, when finances permit. This will serve to provide space for expanded programming for an increasing senior population as well as a meeting and gathering place for the community at large.

Further consideration is needed on what the facility should contain and where best to locate it to support the Roadmap.

- ▶ Prepare a proactive plan that encourages the **provision of a wide range of housing types** to meet the needs of empty nesters, Town employees, young couples, and those of moderate income, by locating housing **in small, scattered sites near walkable service and business destinations**, especially village centers. Consider possible Town participation in desired housing developments. The plan should address the Town's relationship to the state's affordable housing law (Chapter

40B), but its purpose is to address Acton's local and regional housing needs.

This plan should also address the Town's relationship to the 10% goal set by the state's affordable housing law (Chapter 40B) but its purpose is to address Acton's local and regional housing need.

- ▶ Create a new **committee composed of liaisons from the various ethnic and language groups in Town** to provide **information to newcomers and assist with organizing multi-cultural activities**. This will help build bridges, knitting the community closer together, and it will provide guidance to those unfamiliar with the Town and its resources
- ▶ **Continue to support and achieve high standards of excellence in Acton's schools**. A majority of residents when asked "Why did you move to Acton?," respond: "because of the schools." The schools are a major magnet attracting people to the Town and schools and school-related activities are a major community focus contributing to the culture of Acton.

This action is one of the most important to Actonians.

- ▶ **Continue to work to control cost**, planning for future financial responsibilities like the cost of post-employment benefits and finding new ways to reduce current costs, such as regionalization and cooperation with other towns.



Cost and Phasing

Town finances are being squeezed between the desire for services (excellent schools and other Town priorities) and a limited tax base, reduced state aid, and unfunded liabilities. Many of the Plan's top recommendations can begin to be implemented with existing Town staff and relatively small additional expenditures (e.g., small-scale studies to prepare for appropriate growth in the centers). Other priorities like a new building to serve seniors and the larger community, or an expanded shuttle system, are more expensive.

Increasing Fiscal Capacity

One of the 2020 Plan's main goals is to increase fiscal capacity (the ability to pay for desired services and capital investments). It does this by promoting economic development, seeking special purpose state funding and grants, continuing to explore public-private partnerships for specific projects, and cooperation with surrounding towns to provide services more efficiently. The recommendation to reduce energy use in Town buildings and promote Town-wide energy conservation will pay for itself and also help to save money for residents and businesses.

It is significant that a fiscal analysis of the **Roadmap** concluded that by the time 1,200

new housing units and 1.5 million square feet of commercial space have been built (longer than 20 years because of the current economic downturn), Acton's fiscal capacity will be increased by roughly \$5 million per year. This analysis is described in the chapter on the **Roadmap**.

Phasing of Major Expenditures

The solution to this challenge is to **phase the major actions as finances permit**. This can include some open space acquisition and investment in pedestrian and bicycle facilities each year as can be afforded, continuing to fund the MinuteVan at current levels until expansion becomes feasible, phasing public infrastructure improvements to support desired redevelopment in Kelley's Corner as the market revives, and planning for a new senior/community center but putting off construction until it can be afforded.

The diagram on page 47 illustrates the phasing of major expenditures. The timeline runs from 2012 to the point at which the **Roadmap** is realized, with the construction of 1,200 new dwelling units. This was originally projected to take 20 years from the date of the 2020 Plan, but the current economic downturn will likely push this date out by several years.

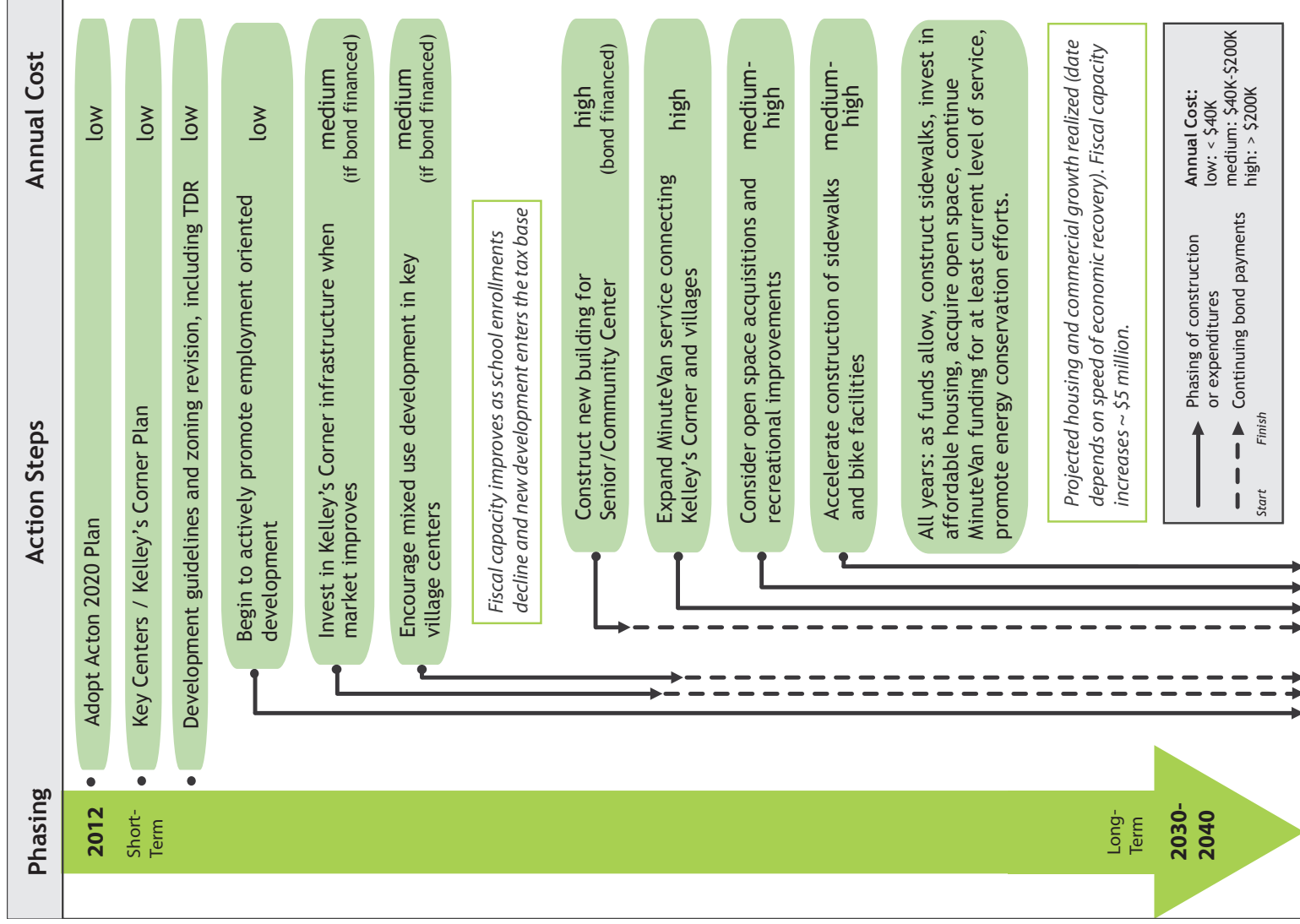
The diagram lists major actions in the short term, mid term and long term. The arrows are a schematic indication of how long the expenditures go on; for example a new senior/community center would be financed with a bond, that would be repaid in annual increments over a period of perhaps 25 years, so the annual expenditures for this capital improvement would begin when Town finances permit and continue through the time horizon shown in the diagram. Other investments, such as infrastructure improvements to support development of Kelley's Corner into a Town center, could occur over a period of four or five years after the real estate market has improved; they may or may not be financed through a bond depending on circumstances at the time.

The diagram indicates the relative annual cost ranges of the major actions. The short-range actions that are essential to prepare for the desired improvements at Kelley's Corner and some of the villages would be relatively inexpensive and should occur as soon as the Town can afford them.

The Plan also encourages the exploration of public/private opportunities for funding.

Phasing Diagram

The following diagram is a proposal for phasing the Plan's recommendations over time.



Tax Rate Implications

Since the timing of development that would expand the tax base is uncertain, the fiscal implications of the recommended major investments are calculated in relation to Acton's current total assessed property value.

Each annual expenditure implies an increment of the tax levy to pay for it, and consequently an increment to the property tax rate. (It is assumed that residential and commercial property are taxed at the same rate as at present.) The tax rate impact is currently about 2.8 cents per \$100,000 of annual expenditure. This is applied to the average single family home value in Acton, which is currently approximately \$500,000; each \$100,000 expenditure would add approximately \$13.75 to the tax bill for the average home.

The table on the right shows the estimated annual costs and tax bill implications for the major expenditures recommended in the plan. Not all items would be occurring simultaneously, particularly in the short term. The annual total would correspond to a cross-section of the Phasing diagram at a particular point in time. Costs for items like sidewalks and open space acquisition can be varied from year to year. In the long term,

bond payments would continue for investments in a senior/community center and infrastructure at Kelley's Corner and potentially some village

centers. However, fiscal capacity is expected to increase by several times this cost, and some of the current bonds would have been retired.

Estimated Cost of Recommended Major Expenditures*

RECOMMENDATION	Estimated Cost	Average Tax Burden per Year
Kelley's Corner Improvements (sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, landscaping)	\$2 million total Bond payments of approx. \$133 thousand per year for 25 years, = \$158,000 per year (could also be financed without bonding for approximately \$400,000 per year during the construction period)	\$22
Open Space Purchase and Park Improvements in addition to CPA funds	\$2.5 million total Average \$125,000 per year	\$17
Town-wide Sidewalks & Bike Paths/Lanes	\$2 million total Average \$100,000 per year	\$14
New Senior/Community Center	\$8 million total - Bond payments of approx. \$534,000 per year for 25 years	\$73 (if entire amount is from Town indebtedness)
Expanded MinuteVan Shuttle	\$350,000 per year	\$48
TOTAL, ALL ITEMS	\$1.27 million/yr	\$174

* Excludes possible infrastructure costs in West Acton, which are uncertain.

Detailed Implementation Plan Tables

The complete Implementation Plan is listed on the following pages. Strategies are organized under the planning objective they help to attain.

For each goal a brief introduction describes the relationship of each goal to the vision, identifies priority action steps, those items related to increasing awareness, and lists some of the activities already underway.

The tables for each goal were extracted from the complete Implementation Plan database <http://implementation.acton2020.info/>. The database can be searched and sorted by the lead owner and other owner of each action step and the master plan element (land use, economic development, etc.) to which it belongs.

The Strategies are arranged in table format under each objective with the following information:

- ▶ **Strategy**
- ▶ **Short Name of Action Step**
- ▶ **Complete text of Action Step**
- ▶ **Priority**
- ▶ **Timing**
- ▶ **Lead Owner**

Key to Notation

Italics: is used to indicate reference to an existing document or study.

Dollar sign (\$): indicates a capital and/or operating expense.

See Also: is used to indicate the instances when a strategy relates to more than one goal; these are indicated in green type.

Endnotes: provided when relevant for additional detail and/or references.

Ripe Apple 🍏: When an action step can be accomplished with low cost and significant benefit.

Lead Owner: is the department, board, or other entity that is designated to initiate action and see it through to the end.

Priority: Top priorities are designate as “Highest” or “2nd Highest.” All other actions of lesser priority do not have a designation in the priority column.

Timing for implementation is indicated as follows:

- Ongoing: currently being done and should be continued or expanded.
- Short-term: should be completed by 2015.
- Medium-term: should be completed by 2020.
- Long-term: should be completed by 2030.
- New Sustained Effort: should be started in the short-term and continued through 2030.

Implementation Strategies for:

GOAL 1Preserve and Enhance
Town Character**Goal Statement:**

We feel strongly about preserving and enhancing what makes Acton special and unique, including its rural characteristics, historic buildings and landscapes, and its village centers.

Relationship to Vision

The action steps under Goal 1 are designed to realize an Acton that has retained its uniqueness by preserving its rural and historic characteristics and by ensuring that any future growth results in the creation of successful places, with attractive, safe, and walkable shopping areas. Kelley's Corner will become a walkable Town center and there will be several vibrant village centers, each distinct in its character.

Overview of Priority Action Steps

The following were identified as priority action steps to meet this goal.

- Guide as much as possible of any future growth to key Town centers, to mixed use infill and redevelopment.
- Carefully review all current zoning Townwide and its build-out potential to ensure that zoning supports the goals articulated in this master plan.
- Consider ways to improve the design review process.
- Develop Kelley's Corner (KC) into a mixed use Town center and transportation hub.
- Complete a *Key Centers Plan* to determine which villages should receive more concentrated growth and to assess the amount and type of new development that is appropriate. A *Kelley's Corner Development Plan* is part of the Key Centers Plan; it provides the basis to proceed with the zoning changes and infrastructure investments needed to begin the process of improving Kelley's Corner

as soon as practicable.

- Support the development of an organization to revitalize Kelley's Corner such as a business association.
- Support the implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). Provide incentives for Transfer of Development Rights away from open land to desired growth centers. Consider multiple ways to fund the acquisition of desirable open space parcels.
- Coordinate Historic District Commission review with development of design guidelines and BoS special permit review of development in historic village centers.
- Provide staffing to assist with plans for villages and key centers, development review, and economic development.

“Kelley's Corner equals eyesore. Make it a first priority, other [villages] to follow.”

~ Acton Resident

GOAL 1

Preserve and Enhance
Town Character cont.

Youth Art Contest Winners: Mackenzie Abernethy



“My artwork specifically portrays objective 1.2. In my opinion, Acton should preserve and enhance village centers because it’s what makes Acton Unique.”

Alex Zhang


“I drew this piece of art because I think it’s a good example of some natural habitat for Acton to have in the future. I decided to draw the Nagog Pond at sunset. Drew with pastel.”





Goal 1: Preserve and Enhance Town Character				
		Objective 1.1: Strengthen planning tools to manage growth pro-actively.	Priority/Timing	Owner
		Strategy 1.1.1: Roadmap for Guiding Growth Use the Roadmap, affirmed at the June 23 2011 public meeting, to guide Acton's planning.		
		Action Item 1.1.1.1: Concentrate growth Guide as much as possible of any future growth to key town centers, to mixed use infill and redevelopment. ¹² This includes a focus on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transforming new and redeveloped commercial space to fit each village or town center's character. Emphasizing walking, biking, and public transportation Continuing open space acquisition/protection See Also: Traffic and parking in centers Development planning that includes water limits Stormwater planning to support 2020 plan Enhance quality of water discharges.	Highest New Sustained Action	Planning Department
		Strategy 1.1.2: Revise planning process Review and revise the Town's bylaws and planning process to support the 2020 Plan goals.		
		Action Item 1.1.2.1: Review zoning in light of plan goals and buildout potential Carefully review all current zoning and its build-out potential to insure that zoning supports the goals articulated in the master plan. Aim to simplify the zoning code to insure clarity of intent and to support the regulatory review process. See Also: Zoning to support Key Centers Plan Zoning that includes water quality impacts Zoning to encourage agriculture Zoning to protect open space Ensure Zoning takes in to account the impact of new development. Consider fiscal impacts of new development when amending the Zoning Bylaw and reviewing special permit applications. Allow more dividing of existing lots for economical housing	Highest Short-Term	Planning Department

		Action Item 1.1.2.2: New development bylaws Research further use of by-laws beyond those already in place (e.g. transfer of development rights, impact fees to include effects on air and water quality, etc.) See Also: Tree-clearing bylaw Simplify sign bylaw Scenic Roads Bylaw Enact a bylaw to control where landscape contractors dispose of debris. Consider fiscal impacts of new development when amending the Zoning Bylaw and reviewing special permit applications	Short-Term	Planning Department
		Action Item 1.1.2.3: Regional cooperation on development issues Encourage continued regional cooperation; consider creating more formal structures for collaborating with neighboring towns to address common issues (including affordable housing developments, transportation, open space protection, etc.)	2 nd Highest Medium-Term	Manager Department
		Action Item 1.1.2.4: Legislation to increase local control over development Support legislation that would increase the Town's control over local land use decisions. See Also: Affordable Housing Strategy	Long-Term	Selectmen
		Action Item 1.1.2.5: Planning/Economic Development staff Add a full-time position to the Planning Department to assist with plans for villages and key centers, development review, and economic development. This position would also fulfill the role of Economic Development Officer (EDO). \$ (Staffing Expense)	Highest Short-Term	Manager Department
		Action Item 1.1.2.6: Index of developable parcels Prepare a database of developable parcels to better inform land use and economic development planning.	Short-Term	Planning Department
		Strategy 1.1.3: Develop a comprehensive site and design review process.		
		Action Item 1.1.3.1: Extend design guidelines Further refine Acton's Design Guidelines for Commercial Development. ³ and extend the guidelines to include large multifamily and village center mixed-use development ⁴⁵	2 nd Highest Short-Term	Design Review Board
		Action Item 1.1.3.2: Improve design review process Consider ways to improve the design review process, defining the role of the Design Review Board (DRB), and enhancing the coordination with the Planning Board and Board of Selectmen, while reserving permit authority with these Boards as applicable. Improve coordination with Historic District Commission when appropriate. Implement improvements. ⁶	Highest Short-Term	Selectmen

Objective 1.2: Preserve and enhance key centers.				
		Strategy 1.2.1: Enhance Key Centers. See Also: Be more business friendly Traffic and parking in centers		
		Action Item 1.2.1.1: Key Centers Plan To determine which villages should receive more concentrated growth and the amount and type of new development, complete a <i>Key Centers Plan</i> that includes the recognized villages and Kelley's Corner. Part of the Key Centers Plan will be a Development Plan for Kelley's Corner, specifying needed infrastructure improvements and zoning changes. ⁷ The Plan should include a review of the existing Village Plans and their outcomes to date, and identify the highest priority components for early implementation to help the Town realize the centers' full potential as destinations.	Highest Short-Term	Planning Department
		Action Item 1.2.1.2: Zoning to support Key Centers Plan Develop and enact zoning, including Transfer of Development Rights, to guide growth through infill and redevelopment in and around existing centers in support of the <i>Key Centers Plan</i> , including the Development Plan for Kelley's Corner. ⁸	Highest Short-Term	Planning Department
		Action Item 1.2.1.3: Town's financial participation in key center development Explore the possible benefits and risks of the Town's financial participation in the development of key centers, with the objectives of catalyzing desired development, increasing control over outcomes, and sharing the financial benefits. Financial participation could include the acquisition of developable parcels and/or the acquisition of development rights to be used in Transfer of Development Rights.	2 nd Highest Short-Term	Selectmen
		Action Item 1.2.1.4: Village-specific sidewalk guidelines As part of the <i>Key Centers Plan</i> update the Sidewalk Design Guidelines to include village-specific design guidelines.	2 nd Highest Short-Term	Sidewalk Committee
		Action Item 1.2.1.5: Encourage developer contributions of public space to town centers Encourage developer contributions of land ⁹ and/or construction of public realm improvements in Kelley's Corner and village centers, e.g., small-scale "vest-pocket" parks that might include bioretention areas and rain gardens, playgrounds, and public seating areas.	Medium-Term	Selectmen
		Action Item 1.2.1.6: Strategic plan for commercial properties Develop a <i>Strategic Plan for Commercial Properties</i> by developing an inventory of all such properties in terms of their existing and build out potential. Identify owners of multiple lots.	Short-Term	Planning Department
		Strategy 1.2.2: Improve Kelley's Corner.		
		Action Item 1.2.2.1: Redevelop Kelley's Corner Develop Kelley's Corner (KC) into a mixed use town center and transportation hub. Prepare a <i>Development Plan for Kelley's Corner</i> as part of the <i>Key Centers Plan</i> . ¹⁰ See Also: Concentrate town investments in Kelley's Corner	Highest Short-Term	Planning Department

	Action Item 1.2.2.2: Concentrate town investments in Kelley's Corner Concentrate Town investments such as sidewalks, landscape and streetscape improvements and traffic calming in Kelley's Corner to make it more pedestrian-friendly and to serve as a gateway. ¹¹ See Also: Teen place Redevelop Kelley's Corner \$\$	Highest Medium-Term	Selectmen
	Action Item 1.2.2.3: Design studio or competition for Kelley's Corner Collaborate with area universities to do a design studio that tests plans through design for their "place-making potential" and/or hold a design competition to develop an urban design vision for Kelley's Corner. Utilize the results in the Development Plan for Kelley's Corner.	Short-Term	Planning Department
	Action Item 1.2.2.4: Kelley's Corner Association Support the development of an organization to revitalize Kelley's Corner such as a business association that could in time become a Business Improvement District or Community Betterment Association. (These are different ways of allowing groups of contiguous businesses or other landowners to each pay for services and infrastructure improvements that benefit the entire location.)	Highest Short-Term 	Business Owners
	Strategy 1.2.3: Improve West Acton Village Center while preserving its historic character		
	Action Item 1.2.3.1: West Acton – Plan some growth Consider designating West Acton Village (WAV) as a "key center" to which some growth is guided. This action step is a planning process focused on WAV that should consider the planning context provided by the <i>Key Centers Plan</i> . ¹² Prepare a design study and development plan for the village to provide the basis for zoning changes and infrastructure investments. ¹³ See Also: Key Centers Plan	2 nd Highest Medium-Term	Planning Department
	Action Item 1.2.3.2: Concentrate investments in West Acton As recommended in the Key Centers Plan and the development plan for West Acton Village, concentrate Town investments such as sidewalks, landscape and streetscape improvements, traffic calming, and wastewater treatment facilities in and around the village. ¹⁴ See Also: West Acton Village sewers \$\$	2 nd Highest Long-Term	Selectmen
	Strategy 1.2.4: Consider directing some growth to North, East, and South Acton Villages Based on the Key Centers Plan, consider designating North, East, and South Acton Villages as growth centers and preparing a development plan or plans based on detailed design studies in a manner similar to the Kelley's Corner and West Acton development plans.	Long-Term	
	Objective 1.3: Preserve rural characteristics and open space		
	Strategy 1.3.1: Document and prioritize rural characteristics Document the rural characteristics that should be preserved. Develop a mechanism for prioritizing those elements which contribute to an appreciation for Acton's history and the pleasure of living here. See Also: CPA funding for some sidewalks		

		Action Item 1.3.1.1: Scenic Roads Bylaw Consider expanding Acton's <i>Scenic Roads Bylaw</i> to protect stone walls, mature trees, and other landscape features to other locations that have been identified as needing protection. ¹⁵	Long-Term	Historical Commission Tree Warden
		Action Item 1.3.1.2: Freedom's Way Landscape Inventory Support the further exploration/implementation of recommendations from the 2006 Freedom's Way Landscape Inventory. ¹⁶	Short-Term	Historical Commission
		Action Item 1.3.1.3: Recognize waterbodies as part of Acton's heritage In planning for historical preservation and appreciation, be sure to include the streams and ponds of Acton as part of Acton's heritage. See Also: Acton Stream Teams	Short-Term 	Historical Commission
		Strategy 1.3.2: Protect open space		
		Action Item 1.3.2.1: Implement OSRP (Open Space portion) Support the implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) including its proactive strategy to anticipate and respond to open space in terms of protection and acquisition of parcels, as well as water resource protection. ¹⁷ \$	Highest Short-Term	Open Space Committee
		Action Item 1.3.2.2: Zoning to protect open space Use zoning to protect open space parcels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the existing practice of encouraging the use of cluster zoning for most residential development outside the centers Provide incentives for transfer of development away from open land to desired growth centers.¹⁸ See Also: New development bylaws	Highest Short-Term	Planning Department
		Action Item 1.3.2.3: Funding of open space protection Consider multiple ways to fund the acquisition of desirable open space parcels so the Town is in a position to take advantage of opportunities when they arise. This action step should begin in the short term and continue through the long term as opportunities and finances permit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use tax income from economic development Consider higher Community Preservation Act assessments and continue to use Community Preservation funds for purchase of high priority sites Borrow funds for major purchases Research other fund opportunities Consider "purchase and develop part" strategies as a way of funding open space purchases See Also: Housing sites with open space purchases \$\$	Highest Ongoing	Open Space Committee

		Action Item 1.3.2.4: Other tools for protecting open space Utilize other regulatory tools and incentives to protect open space. This action step should begin in the short term and continue through the long term as opportunities arise. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively support agriculture Provide tax incentives to protect open space Promote community gardens, country fairs and farmer's markets Purchase agricultural preservation restrictions (APRs), with money coming from the Community Preservation Act funds, Transfer of Development Rights, and other sources. 	2 nd Highest New Sustained Action	Natural Resources Department Selectmen
		Objective 1.4: Preserve historic buildings and landscapes.		
		Strategy 1.4.1: Develop preservation priorities.		
		Action Item 1.4.1.1: Identify historic features Continue to define historic characteristics (buildings, views, landscapes, etc.) and work with relevant committees to actively preserve these. ¹⁹	2 nd Highest Ongoing	Historical Commission Historic District Commission
		Strategy 1.4.2: Preserve historic features Preserve historically significant buildings, landscapes and other historic features. See Also: Scenic Roads Bylaw		
		Action Item 1.4.2.1: Coordinate Historic District review process Coordinate Historic District Commission review with development of design guidelines and BoS special permit review of development in historic village centers. Consider giving HDC jurisdiction to review color choices.	Short-Term	Selectmen
		Action Item 1.4.2.2: Protection outside of Historic Districts Explore options for protecting historic landscapes and historic resources located outside the established historic districts. (See Cultural Resources List) See Also: Develop preservation priorities	Medium-Term	Historical Commission
		Action Item 1.4.2.3: Outreach to private historic property owners Conduct outreach to private historic property owners to promote an understanding of their buildings' place in Acton's history and to help with funding for preservation. ²⁰	Short-Term 	Historical Commission Historic District Commission

Objective 1.5: Foster an understanding and appreciation for what makes Acton unique, including its history.				
		Strategy 1.5.1: Promote an active interest in the past on the part of residents and visitors alike.		
		Action Item 1.5.1.1: Tourist infrastructure Invest in tourist support infrastructure for certain key sites and publicize town features (historic site, nature trails, etc).	Long-Term	Historical Commission
		Action Item 1.5.1.2: Town gateways Improve town entrances / gateways to be welcoming and reflect Acton's historic heritage. See Also: Improve Kelley's Corner \$	2 nd Highest Long-Term	Economic Development Committee Historical Commission
		Action Item 1.5.1.3: Historic celebrations Continue to support historic celebrations and efforts to increase awareness of Acton's historic past (e.g. events, plaques, Historic Marker program, school curriculum).	Ongoing	Historical Commission
		Action Item 1.5.1.4: Include Native history Expand the telling of Acton's history to include a wider time period and events including Native American history as well as European history of the town. (For example, the 'Trail Through Time' in North Acton.)	Ongoing	Historical Commission

¹ For a more complete write-up of the results of the June 23 workshop see <https://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/Get/Document-33530/...>

² See the links under See Also for examples of how to increase the sustainability of these already concentrated areas and avoid risks to air and water quality.

³ See current at <http://www.acton-ma.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=343>

⁴ Add incentives dependent on preserving character and compatibility with historic resources. Make guidelines specific to targeted growth centers and other areas of town to make residential and commercial development consistent with other 2020 Plan goals. Single and two-family residential would not be included in design review.

⁵ Consider how design guidelines can encourage actions in support of preserving or remediating surface and groundwater and air quality, such as alternative energy, vegetated roofs, bioretention areas, etc.

⁶ For special permits, expand and standardize the information required from developers, e.g., fiscal and traffic impacts of proposed development

⁷ The Key Centers Plan will set priorities for new development and redevelopment in centers. The plan should consider Kelley's Corner and the villages as a system, build on existing strengths in each, identify necessary aesthetic and functional improvements, assess capacity for density incentives, and prioritize and sequence which areas to work on first. This plan would include a quantitative analysis of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) system, to verify which incentives are most likely to create the desired changes. The Kelley's Corner Development Plan will be part of the Key Centers Plan; it will provide the basis to proceed with zoning changes and infrastructure investments needed to begin the improvements at Kelley's Corner and promote development and redevelopment of key parcels as soon as practicable.

⁸ The zoning should be specific to each center and should specify minimum performance standards and density incentives for meeting additional criteria, including Transfer of Development Rights from areas the Town wishes to preserve. It should address both buildings and landscape/streetscape. Examples of achieving vitality, attractiveness, and walkability include:

- Encourage activity by promoting a variety of uses at different times of day and night, such as grocery store, a variety of businesses, family restaurant, places for programmed events, pubs, movie house, etc.
- Support walkability in the centers by providing sidewalks along the street and well-lit and landscaped pathways to buildings and within parking lots. Provide parking on street and in combined lots behind buildings
- Encourage unique and fun window-shopping
- Support locally owned shops; develop “buy local” campaign
- Identify, seek, and support anchor with “pulling power”
- Provide more on-street parking to support businesses and help slow down traffic
- Plant flowers and trees to enhance village streets and contribute to traffic mitigation
- Encourage our ethnic communities to contribute vitality through cultural events, celebration, food, etc.

⁹ Priority should be given to parcels identified in the Acton Open Space and Recreation Plan.

¹⁰ Based on this study:

- Delineate areas that should receive development, infill, and redevelopment.
- Determine desired density and type of use for these areas, e.g., wide range of shops and restaurants.
- Prepare KC-specific design studies and design guidelines.
- Create list of criteria to apply as incentives during special permit development review, e.g., proactive solutions for potential groundwater issues; provision by developers of outdoor seating; separating seating areas from sidewalk with plants, low fence, etc.
- Consider Kelley’s Corner gateway opportunities, i.e., what the design of this area should communicate to visitors and citizens as they drive into town.
- Plan how to resolve existing and potential stormwater issues in Kelley’s corner

¹¹ Such investments include sidewalks, benches, signage, landscaping (for aesthetics and to mitigate runoff), etc.; encourage the provision of outdoor seating; separate seating areas from sidewalk with plants, low fence, etc.

¹² Use this planning process to ensure we understand what makes West Acton currently a successful village so that efforts to enhance it don’t threaten what contributes to its village identity and livability.

¹³ Based on this study:

- Delineate any areas that should receive development, infill, and redevelopment.
- Include water and air quality considerations when delineating areas to be redeveloped/subject to infill, and include low impact development and advanced stormwater management in design guidelines.
- Prepare WAV-specific design guidelines.
- Create a list of criteria to apply as incentives during special permit development review.
- Make necessary zoning changes and infrastructure improvements.

¹⁴ Sewer extension and package wastewater treatment plants are options to consider. This action step can begin in the medium term (after Kelley's Corner investments) but may not be completed until the long term.

¹⁵ Acton's Scenic Roads Bylaw regulates the removal of stone walls and trees within the right of way for 33 roads. Using this prioritization as a starting point, consider other locations where stone walls or other landscape features provide an important reminder of Acton's historical development and land use or contribute to our appreciation of the landscape.

¹⁶ The *Freedom's Way Landscape Inventory* is a 32 page report prepared in June 2006 by Acton citizens in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Freedom Way Heritage Association. The report includes many recommendations related to preserving rural character. <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/histland/recon...>

¹⁷ Based on the 2012 OSRP, define primary purpose of protecting open space and develop criteria for prioritizing parcels (e.g. conservation, views, active recreation, protection of water resources, etc.); create a short list of open space protection priorities and stay focused on that list. Ensure broad public understanding regarding which open space is not protected and to what degree protected space is indeed protected.

¹⁸ Transfer of development rights can preserve the entire open parcel; cluster zoning usually preserves just over half of the parcel.

¹⁹ Incorporate appropriate recommendations from 2006 Freedom's Way Heritage Landscape Inventory and refer to Mass Historic Commission Survey Forms. Consider desirability of expanding current historic districts to include older historic homes and historically significant structures (as listed in the Cultural Resources List)

²⁰ HDC is developing a revolving loan/grant program, potentially funded in part by CPA funds, modeled after the Town's revolving loan fund for septic system improvements.

Implementation Strategies for:

GOAL 2 Ensure Environmental Sustainability

Goal Statement:

We recognize that our health and well-being depend on protecting the web of life of which we are a part. Therefore, it is vital that we live and work here in a manner that supports that web and the well-being of people everywhere, including future Acton citizens.

Relationship to Vision

The strategies listed under this goal relate specifically to resident, business owner and Town officials' stated objective to take measures directly to save energy and reduce the carbon footprint. There are also a number of strategies listed under other goals that help to attain the goal of environmental sustainability by, for example, providing alternatives to car travel.

Overview of Priority Action Steps

The following were identified as priority action steps to meet this goal.

- Continue to monitor groundwater quantity and quality, and plan for necessary Acton Water District (AWD) service expansion, quality improvements, and well-head protection.
- Use a proactive approach to mitigating existing stormwater issues and avoiding new problems.
- Improve the Transfer Station to encourage recycling, and turn part of it into a renewable energy power plant.
- Encourage the growth of local businesses that can provide local shopping opportunities and employment.
- Evaluate supporting a "Transition Initiative," a community-wide collaborative effort of citizens and Town government, using education, planning, and action steps to move Acton

toward local resilience and energy autonomy.

- Protect existing agricultural land through acquisition or transfer of development rights and promotion of agricultural tax abatements.

“Support mixed use development so that people live, shop, dine, work, etc. in one locale thus reducing transportation demand.”

~ Acton Resident

GOAL 2 Ensure Environmental Sustainability cont.



Youth Art Contest Winner: Sanjana Krishna











- “
- Solar powered car - less emissions of gases
 - Solar powered town bus
 - Solar powered houses (powered by solar panels on roof)
 - Composter in a home
 - Rain water collector in town hall and in one of the homes so people don't waste water
 - Fresh water pond to support biodiversity of water animals
 - Less cars on road = less gas
 - A bike path to encourage healthy recreation
 - Vegetable garden to grow healthy locally produced food
- ”



Goal 2: Ensure Environmental Sustainability			Priority/Timing	Owner
	Objective 2.1: Protect the quality and quantity of Acton's water.			
	Strategy 2.1.1: Development planning that includes water limits Make specific plans to identify and address the limits to development implicit in our water systems that take our groundwater, stormwater, and surface water into account.			
	Action Item 2.1.1.1: Monitor groundwater quantity and quality Continue to monitor groundwater quantity (i.e. groundwater surface elevation and flow rates) and quality, and plan for necessary Acton Water District (AWD) service expansion, quality improvements, and well-head protection. See Also: Monitoring private wells		Highest Ongoing	Acton Water District Health Department
	Action Item 2.1.1.2: EPA WaterSense fixtures Consider regulatory changes and/or incentives requiring EPA WaterSense fixtures in new construction and major renovations.		Short-Term	Building Department
	Action Item 2.1.1.3: Zoning that includes water quality impacts Zoning needs to take water quality impacts into consideration; for example, ensuring riparian protection areas, and limiting density and types of use near water resources.		Ongoing	Planning Department
	Strategy 2.1.2: Locate and design new development and supporting infrastructure to limit and mitigate impacts on groundwater quality. See Also: Redevelop Kelley's Corner Implement the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan			
	Action Item 2.1.2.1: West Acton Village sewers Consider extension of sewer and/or advanced package wastewater treatment in West Acton Village to serve redevelopment of the commercial area north of Massachusetts Ave and also to serve existing high priority neighborhoods identified in the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan. ¹ Consider whether to rely on betterment fees for these improvements or to include Town or developer contributions. \$\$ (Enterprise Fund) See Also: Implement the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan		2 nd Highest Long-Term	Health Department Selectmen



		Action Item 2.1.2.2: Advanced package wastewater treatment Where possible and consistent with water quality protection, utilize advanced package wastewater treatment with groundwater recharge for other concentrations of residential and commercial development. ² See Also: Implement the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan	2 nd Highest Ongoing	Board of Health
		Action Item 2.1.2.3: Enhance quality of water discharges. Enhance the quality of all discharges into the ground (both stormwater and wastewater) in current and new sources. ³	Ongoing	Board of Health
		Action Item 2.1.2.4: Move industrial activity away from recharge areas Consider zoning and incentives to slowly move industrial activity from rivers and wellfield recharge areas.	Long-term	Planning Department
		Action Item 2.1.2.5: Match Water District and Town protection zones Amend the groundwater protection overlay bylaw to make the overlay districts fully consistent with Acton Water District protection zones. ⁴	Ongoing	Planning Department
		Action Item 2.1.2.6: Protect AWD buffer zone along Mass Ave. Ensure that Acton Water District land and buffer zone on Mass Ave in West Acton is not targeted for development.	Long-term	Planning Department
		Strategy 2.1.3: Manage Stormwater Manage stormwater to reduce impacts on streams and to recharge groundwater.		
		Action Item 2.1.3.1: Stormwater planning to support 2020 plan Use a proactive approach to mitigating existing stormwater issues and avoiding new problems throughout Acton. In Kelley's Corner and West Acton, do this in a manner consistent with the objective of concentrating growth, and use planning and development review to address these issues. Review existing stormwater management techniques for applicability. This action step should commence in the short term and continue through the long term. See Also: Key Centers Plan	Highest Long-Term	Health Department
		Action Item 2.1.3.2: Limit impervious surfaces In reviewing development, consider incentives and infrastructure to create better managed runoff recharge by limiting impervious surfaces. This action step should begin in the short term and continue through the long term. ⁵	2 nd Highest New Sustained Action	Planning Department


		Strategy 2.1.4: Encourage private action to conserve water Inform the public and encourage private action to conserve water and reduce impacts to groundwater quality.		
		Action Item 2.1.4.1: Provide water education Provide broad-based education on how our water systems work; where our water resources are located, and how water flows through withdrawal, use, and disposal of wastewater; and promote sustainable use by residents and businesses. ⁶ See Also: Acton Stream Teams	2 nd Highest Ongoing 	Acton Water District
		Action Item 2.1.4.2: Continue and expand on Acton Water District water conservation encouragement programs.	2 nd Highest Ongoing	Acton Water District
		Action Item 2.1.4.3: Support Acton Water District in enforcing and strengthening water use regulations.	Short-Term	
		Action Item 2.1.4.4: Monitoring private wells Create better incentives and systems to ensure private well owners also monitor and report on their wells. ⁷	Short-Term	Board of Health
		Action Item 2.1.4.5: Update private well standards Update water quality standards for residential private wells, including provisions to decommission unused or noncompliant private wells according to Massachusetts DEP guidelines.	Short-Term 	Board of Health
		Action Item 2.1.4.6: Encourage environmentally friendly lawns and gardens Identify and encourage the replacement of all or part of home lawns with low-maintenance perennials or gardens. This action step should begin in the short term and continue through the long term. ⁸ See Also: Promote healthy biological communities	Ongoing	Acton Water District
		Action Item 2.1.4.7: Rainwater harvesting Encourage rainwater harvesting for irrigation and landscaping. This action step should begin in the short term and continue through the long term. ⁹	Long-Term	Acton Water District
		Action Item 2.1.4.8: Acton Stream Teams Encourage the revival of the Acton Stream Teams to have citizens periodically monitor and report on the state of streams in Acton - so the Town can document changes and identify and resolve issues.	Short-Term	Citizens and citizen groups


Objective 2.2: Reduce waste and the accumulation of toxins.				
Strategy 2.2.1: Reduce the size of the solid waste stream.				
		Action Item 2.2.1.1: Education on disposal of unwanted items Distribute information to residents on how they can reduce unwanted items, and make items no longer needed available for use by others. ¹⁰	Short-Term 	Zero Waste Committee
		Action Item 2.2.1.2: Create a Zero Waste Committee to promote recycling, reduction, and reuse.	Short-Term 	Selectmen
		Action Item 2.2.1.3: Provide recycling bins in public places Provide recycling bins in central locations around the Town, and a system for processing them. ¹¹	Short-Term 	Zero Waste Committee
		Action Item 2.2.1.4: Reduce use of throw-aways. Encourage the public to reduce the use of throw-away plastic (bottled water, single-use bags). Lead by example: provide water pitchers and, where practicable, washable cups for Town board and committee meetings (especially for high-profile public meetings such as Town Meeting). Leverage Scout troops and schools to influence children.	Short-Term 	Zero Waste Committee
		Action Item 2.2.1.5: Packaging reduction incentives Encourage local stores to implement packaging reduction incentives. ¹²	Medium-Term	Zero Waste Committee
		Action Item 2.2.1.6: Support expanded bottle bill Support the state initiative to expand beverage container deposits.	Ongoing	Zero Waste Committee
Strategy 2.2.2: Increase recycling and reuse.				
		Action Item 2.2.2.1: Improve Transfer Station to promote waste reduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a permanent sheltered drop/swap site at the transfer station. • Research single-stream recycling at the transfer center. • Re-consider implementing a 'pay as you throw' system. • Allow any Acton resident to get a "recycling only" sticker for free. See Also: Local hazardous waste days	Highest Short-Term 	Board of Health

		Action Item 2.2.2.2: Private trash haulers - waste reduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require multifamily residential developments to provide a recycling strategy for residents. As a license condition, require that trash contractors report annually to the town on numbers of households they serve, and trash and recycling amounts, as a first step toward creating trash policies that include the curbside providers. 	2 nd Highest Short-Term	Selectmen
		Action Item 2.2.2.3: Encourage sports teams to use reusable sports bottles. See Also: Reduce use of throw-aways.	Short-Term	Recreation Commission School Committees
		Action Item 2.2.2.4: Enact a bylaw to control where landscape contractors dispose of debris.	Short-Term	Selectmen
		Action Item 2.2.2.5: Promote composting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate, advocate, and encourage home composting, and provide inexpensive composting bins. Provide more composting services at the transfer station. Study if requiring or encouraging curbside composting service would be practical and effective. Encourage the schools to explore options and develop a food composting program, starting at the central campus. 	2 nd Highest Short-Term 	Green Advisory Board School Committees Sustainability Coordinator
		Strategy 2.2.3: Manage hazardous waste appropriately.		
		Action Item 2.2.3.1: Educate regarding unwanted electronics (e-waste) Conduct e-waste education, and support events where cost effective certified e-waste specialist services are easily available. ¹³	2 nd Highest Short-Term 	Green Advisory Board
		Action Item 2.2.3.2: Increase number of local hazardous waste days Have more hazardous waste days at the transfer station. Continue accepting pharmaceuticals, and continue to explore expanding the items to be collected.	Ongoing 	Board of Health
		Action Item 2.2.3.3: Regional hazardous waste days Consider joining the Devens Hazardous Waste Collection Consortium, or a similar regional program elsewhere.	Short-Term	Selectmen

		Action Item 2.2.3.4: Promote use of non-toxic products Reduce or eliminate the use of toxic cleaning products, pesticides in municipal and school buildings and grounds. See Also: Promote healthy biological communities	Short-Term 	Municipal Properties School Committees
		Objective 2.3: Reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.		
		Strategy 2.3.1: Encourage use of cleaner energy sources.		
		Action Item 2.3.1.1: Renewable energy at transfer station Turn part of the transfer station into a renewable energy power plant. ¹⁴	Highest Ongoing 	Manager Department
		Action Item 2.3.1.2: District heating Permit and provide incentives where applicable for the use of multi-building ground-source heating systems (“district heating”) for new dense development and redevelopment.	Short-Term	Building Department
		Action Item 2.3.1.3: Geothermal energy Advocate for the use of geo-thermal heat pumps in new residential and commercial construction where appropriate.	Medium-Term	Green Advisory Board
		Strategy 2.3.2: Reduce energy use in new and renovated buildings.		
		Action Item 2.3.2.1: Advice on energy reductions Provide advice to home-owners, businesses and contractors to undertake new building and renovation projects that reduce energy use. ¹⁵	2 nd Highest Short-Term	Green Advisory Board
		Action Item 2.3.2.2: LEED certification Adopt a policy that new public buildings are to be LEED certified Gold or better.	Medium-Term	Selectmen
		Strategy 2.3.3: Reduce energy use in existing buildings.		
		Action Item 2.3.3.1: Sustainability coordinator Create a position for a Sustainability Coordinator, funded by the Town at ½ full-time equivalent (0.5 FTE), and expand these hours as other sources of funding allow. As workload permits, this person would assist the Green Advisory Board with other sustainability efforts. ¹⁶ \$ (Staffing expense)	2 nd Highest Short-Term	Manager Department
		Action Item 2.3.3.2: PACE legislation Support Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) legislation. ¹⁷ Implement this program if it becomes available for Acton.	Short-Term	Selectmen

		Action Item 2.3.3.3: Energy retrofits on public buildings Continue to retrofit existing public buildings to increase energy efficiency. Establish a policy on the minimum pay-back period for these investments \$	2 nd Highest Ongoing	Municipal Properties School Committees
		Action Item 2.3.3.4: Energy-efficient ("Cool") roofing Encourage the use of more reflective roofing, especially in the infrared range, to reduce heating costs. ¹⁸ Sometimes this "cool" roofing is lighter colored, but not always. Allow such 'cool' roofing in historic districts. ¹⁹	Medium-Term	Building Department
		Strategy 2.3.4: Reduce transportation-related CO2 emissions. See Also: Provide and encourage public transportation Make walking and biking easier and safer		
		Action Item 2.3.4.1: Encourage the growth of local businesses that can provide local shopping opportunities and employment. See Also: Be more business friendly Enhance Key Centers	Highest Medium-Term	Economic Development Officer
		Action Item 2.3.4.2: Support web-based car pooling and ride sharing.	2 nd Highest Medium-Term	Transportation Advisory Committee
		Action Item 2.3.4.3: Reduce vehicle idling Educate the public and enforce and encourage compliance with anti-idling laws, especially at schools and the train station.	Medium-Term	Police
		Strategy 2.3.5: Inform and educate Acton residents and businesses regarding energy efficiency.		
		Action Item 2.3.5.1: Educate and increase people's awareness of the need to reduce their carbon footprint.	Short-Term 	Citizens and citizen groups Green Advisory Board
		Action Item 2.3.5.2: Promote energy-efficiency upgrade programs Help promote utility and/or state sponsored energy-efficiency upgrade programs for appliances, lighting, and weatherization. ²⁰	2 nd Highest Short-Term 	Green Advisory Board
		Action Item 2.3.5.3: Encourage Air-drying of clothing Continue to encourage air-drying of clothing, and advocate for the removal of any home-owner association restrictions on outdoor line-drying. ²¹	Ongoing	Green Advisory Board

		Action Item 2.3.5.4: Energy 'barn raisings' Support and expand on existing energy-saving 'barn raisings' by community organizations and individuals. ²²	Ongoing	Citizens and citizen groups
		Strategy 2.3.6: Continue planning for reducing Acton's carbon footprint.		
		Action Item 2.3.6.1: Leverage Green Communities grants Continue to leverage Green Community grants for energy-reduction activities.	Ongoing 	Green Advisory Board
		Action Item 2.3.6.2: Expand GAB role Expand the role of the Green Advisory Board to include researching and advocating for energy savings in residential, commercial, and industrial sectors.	2 nd Highest Short-Term	Selectmen
		Action Item 2.3.6.3: Carbon Footprint measurement and reduction plan Conduct town-wide carbon footprint tracking and prepare and implement an energy reduction plan. ²³	Short-Term	Green Advisory Board
		Action Item 2.3.6.4: Joint community and town effort to use less fossil fuels Evaluate supporting a "Transition Initiative," a community-wide collaborative effort of citizens and Town government, using education, planning, and action steps to move Acton toward local resilience and energy autonomy. ²⁴	New Sustained Action	Citizens and citizen groups Green Advisory Board
		Objective 2.4: Healthy Patterns of Land Use Move toward patterns of land use and land protection that support broad biodiversity, soil preservation, and healthy local agriculture.		
		Strategy 2.4.1: Adopt land use strategies that reduce the development of open land. See Also: Concentrate growth Zoning to support Key Centers Plan Protect open space Provide and encourage public transportation		
		Strategy 2.4.2: Biodiversity Maintain and increase biodiversity on Town conservation land and private land.		
		Action Item 2.4.2.1: Remove invasive plants Organize efforts to remove invasive plant species from public and private land. ²⁵	Long-Term	Conservation Commission

		Action Item 2.4.2.2: Promote healthy biological communities Consider regulations, and promote practices, that support healthy communities of plants and animals. Act to minimize the use of broad-spectrum herbicides and pesticides, and promote organic agriculture and landscaping practices. See Also: Environmentally Friendly Lawns and Gardens Manage hazardous waste appropriately	Medium-Term	Board of Health
		Action Item 2.4.2.3: Discourage invasive plantings Continue to discourage residential and commercial property owners and landscape contractors from planting invasive plant species. ²⁶	Ongoing 	Natural Resources Department
		Action Item 2.4.2.4: Education on native plants and biodiversity Develop and implement a public education program on the role of native plants in supporting Acton's biodiversity.	Medium-Term	Natural Resources Department
		Action Item 2.4.2.5: Tree-clearing bylaw Explore the adoption of a tree-clearing bylaw, which would require notice and justification from landowners for certain large tree clearing operations on private parcels.	2 nd Highest Short-Term	Selectmen
		Action Item 2.4.2.6: Plant and protect large trees Provide education and support the public and private planting and protection of large, long-lasting, carbon-sequestering trees. ²⁷ See Also: Manage, preserve, and replace Acton's street trees.	Long-Term	Tree Warden
		Strategy 2.4.3: Conserve farm land and support agriculture in Acton. See Also: Promote healthy biological communities Conserve farming on town-owned land		
		Action Item 2.4.3.1: Protect existing agricultural land Protect existing agricultural land through acquisition or transfer of development rights and promotion of agricultural tax abatements.	Highest Ongoing	Natural Resources Department
		Action Item 2.4.3.2: Support new farming Support new and expanded farming, including organic farming, Community Supported Agriculture, and community gardening on Town-owned land.	2 nd Highest Ongoing	Natural Resources Department
		Action Item 2.4.3.3: Support the Morrison Farm plan Final report is here: www.acton-ma.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=865	Ongoing	Morrison Farm Committee

			Action Item 2.4.3.4: Zoning to encourage agriculture Change zoning to encourage the use of cluster development common land for gardening and agriculture; consider density bonuses.	2 nd Highest Short-Term	Planning Department
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¹ These locations are addressed in the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan. These issues, including the relationship of local costs for betterments and townwide benefits, should be included in planning for development of West Acton Village and other designated growth centers

² Package treatment plant effluent discharged in a Zone II water protection area should undergo the highest possible level of treatment. No discharge is allowed into a Zone I.

³ Focus especially on reducing phosphorus discharges for surface water and nitrogen discharges for ground water, and other contaminants typically found in stormwater runoff, such as pesticides and herbicides used on lawns, and contaminants from automobiles found in parking lot runoff

⁴ Town Meeting in 2011 made the Zone II definitions almost the same for the Town and Water District.

⁵ Limiting impervious surfaces might lead to adverse impact of groundwater in Zone II's; this should be a tiered system depending on the sensitivity of a site's location.

⁶ Groups that have been doing this for some time include Acton Citizens for Environmental Safety (ACES), The Discovery Museums, and the Stream Teams.

⁷ Consider a requirement for private irrigation wells in Zone IIs to meter and report their water use during periods when the Water District limits or prohibits watering. At some point water use monitoring for private wells may be required by our DEP water withdrawal permit, and count against the town's withdrawal limit.

⁸ Advocate for removing any home-owner association restrictions against replacing lawns with other vegetation that needs little or no irrigation and chemical applications, and provide public education on home landscaping options that use less water and avoid or reduce fertilizer and pesticide/herbicide applications.

⁹ A key step is to amend the health board ban on cisterns to forbid only cisterns that serve as potable water supplies.

¹⁰ Examples of unwanted items include catalogs and junk mail; ways of making items available for re-use include Freecycle and tag sales. A flyer was developed in the past by the "Life after NESWC" Committee.

¹¹ Bins should be located where their contents, if spilled accidentally or by vandalism, do not adversely impact stormwater systems or surface waterbodies.

¹² Examples: money off if you bring your own bags, sales of products in bulk, etc.

¹³ Green Acton has held annual Drop and Swap days since 2010 that include e-waste recycling.

¹⁴ A Power Purchase Agreement is in progress; it would involve placing photovoltaic panels on unused Transfer Station property.

¹⁵ This includes both the construction process (site development, choice of materials) and their design – promoting energy efficiency (as well as water savings, and a healthy indoor environment in weather-tight buildings.)

¹⁶ This role could include the current part-time position of energy coordinator for the schools as well as other sustainability efforts.

¹⁷ PACE allows home-owners to pay for energy upgrades over time with a line item on their local tax bill, with financial backing from the Commonwealth.

¹⁸ <http://www.nyc.gov/html/coolroofs/html/how/benefit...>

¹⁹ Guidelines are needed to address situations such as flat or pitched roofs, in and outside of historic districts. A future step, if research supports it, would be to provide incentives or require such roofs in appropriate situations

²⁰ The MassSave program provides resources that can be used. Work with builders and suppliers to make clients aware of energy saving options.

²¹ Advocacy may be done association by association, or via a town-wide bylaw, or via lobbying the Massachusetts legislature to pass a ban on homeowner association bans of clotheslines.

²² Barn raisings” refers to community-organized home energy audits followed by volunteer energy-reduction work: caulking, bulb changes, etc.

²³ This is part of the Town’s existing commitment to ICLEI (Local Governments for Sustainability).

²⁴ For more details on Transition Initiatives, see <http://transitionus.org/> or <http://greenacton.org/transition>)

²⁵ For information on this topic see: <http://www.newfs.org/protect/invasive-plants/index>. An example is the work that has been done on garlic mustard eradication on Acton property. Care in implementing this recommendation is needed, as there is not always agreement on which plant species are invasive.

²⁶ Acton Garden Club has done a lot of education around invasive plants.

²⁷ Disease-resistant Elm and Chestnut trees are becoming available.

Implementation Strategies for:

GOAL 3 Improve Connections

Goal Statement:

We recognize that a community that is connected is safer, stronger, and provides more opportunities for meaningful interaction. We envision supporting these connections through physical means including sidewalks, bike paths, trails and public transportation to connect people and places, and to support independent and safe travel for all. We also envision open communication as a means to further connect residents (e.g. through the web, cable TV, community bulletin boards, etc.)

Relationship to Vision

Actonians expressed a strong desire to improve connections, both physical and virtual, so that they have safe and pleasant ways to travel and so that communication is improved. Residents recognized that extending sidewalks, providing safe biking and extending the Town shuttle improve connections between people and places, provide opportunities to meet fitness and wellness goals, and takes better care of the environment. The strategies listed under this goal are ways of addressing these needs and desires.

Overview of Priority Action Steps

The following were identified as priority action steps to meet this goal.

- Construct new sidewalks according to the sidewalk priority list. Follow the sidewalk design guidelines when constructing new sidewalks or updating existing ones.

- Continue to fund the MinuteVan shuttle, and later expand the system with more vehicles, more frequent service, and longer service hours. Consider making it a fixed route system.

“A shuttle should absolutely be available all day for all citizens with frequent runs. Teenage use should be promoted.”

~ Acton Resident

GOAL 3 Improve Connections cont.

Youth Art Contest Winners:

Luca Ilic



“My artwork is a drawing of me (at bottom) thinking of 4 ways to improve transportation and connections around Town.”

Meghna Sundaram





“Goal 3.2. & 3.3.: Improve Transportation around Town using existing resources and improve communication
Goal 6 & 7: Manage Town facilities efficiently by reusing buses. Promote fiscal responsibility - lesser Town vehicles to maintain.”


Peter Busse




“Picture of a boy on a bike.”


Goal 3: Improve Connections				
Objective 3.1: Make walking and biking easier and safer.			Priority/Timing	Owner
		Strategy 3.1.1: Build appropriate sidewalks See Also: Village-specific sidewalk guidelines Non-motorized access to open space		
		Action Item 3.1.1.1: Maintain sidewalk priority list Continue to update the Sidewalk Construction Priority List. Emphasize projects that provide safe access to schools, recreation areas, the train station, and the villages, particularly the designated growth centers. As public transportation options grow, provide sidewalk access to transit access spots. See Also: Non-car access requirements in commercial development Village-specific sidewalk guidelines	Ongoing	Sidewalk Committee
		Action Item 3.1.1.2: Construct more sidewalks Construct new sidewalks according to the priority list. Follow the <i>Guidelines for Acton Sidewalk Design</i> when constructing new sidewalks or updating existing ones. ¹ \$	Highest Ongoing	Engineering Department
		Action Item 3.1.1.3: CPA funding for some sidewalks Investigate opportunities to use CPA funds for some sidewalk connections. Consider historic characteristics or recreational opportunities. See Also: Document and prioritize rural characteristics \$	Short-Term	Planning Department Sidewalk Committee
		Strategy 3.1.2: Increase opportunities for safe biking See Also: Non-motorized access to open space		
		Action Item 3.1.2.1: Planning for bicycle improvements Develop guidelines for bike lanes and off-road paths. Identify locations and develop a construction plan for off-road multi-use paths and bike lanes to improve the ability of people to bicycle to destinations in Town.	2 nd Highest Short-Term	Transportation Advisory Committee
		Action Item 3.1.2.2: Assabet River Rail Trail Complete the construction of the Assabet River Rail Trail. Need to influence MassDOT and Boston MPO.	Ongoing	Planning Department
		Action Item 3.1.2.3: Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Complete the construction of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail. Need to influence MassDOT and Boston MPO.	Ongoing	Planning Department

		Action Item 3.1.2.4: Connect ARRT and BFRT Explore ways to connect the Assabet River Rail Trail and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.	Long-Term	Planning Department Transportation Advisory Committee
		Action Item 3.1.2.5: Provide more bike racks Locate bike racks where feasible and where they will be used.	Short-Term 	Planning Department
		Action Item 3.1.2.6: Multi-use path planning Identify locations for off-road multi-use paths, bike lanes, and wider shared lanes and shoulders where appropriate to improve the ability of people to bicycle to destinations in Town. Prepare town-wide recommendations for locations, and construct improvements. ² \$	2nd Highest Medium-Term	Engineering Department Planning Department Transportation Advisory Committee
		Action Item 3.1.2.7: Multi-use paths through open space Consider making some paths in town open space usable by bikes, wheelchairs and strollers, in order to create safe bicycle paths between neighborhoods and other destinations. \$	Long-Term	Transportation Advisory Committee
		Action Item 3.1.2.8: Developers provide off-road multi-use paths Increase the requirement in the subdivision regulations for developer contributions to off-road multi-use paths and sidewalks.	Medium-Term	Planning Board Planning Department
		Strategy 3.1.3: Improve communications about walking and biking paths		
		Action Item 3.1.3.1: Update pedestrian and bike maps Keep maps current showing sidewalks, bike paths and hiking paths. Make these available on the town website. Consider providing updated information to Google Maps for incorporation in their database.	2 nd Highest Short-Term 	Engineering Department Land Stewardship Committee
		Action Item 3.1.3.2: Non-car access requirements in commercial development Consider incorporating requirements for pedestrian and bicycle accommodation in new commercial development. ³	Medium-Term	Planning Department

		Action Item 3.1.3.3: Pedestrian safety at town facilities Improve accessibility and safety at Town facilities, particularly the libraries and schools, for pedestrians, people with wheelchairs, and bicyclists. \$	Short-Term	Municipal Properties
		Action Item 3.1.3.4: Increase awareness regarding sharing the road issues Provide outreach to drivers and cyclists to increase awareness of their responsibility to share the road safely.	Short-Term 	Transportation Advisory Committee
Objective 3.2: Improve transportation around town.				
		Strategy 3.2.1: Provide and encourage public transportation See Also: Concentrate growth Provide more transportation service for seniors. Teen activities accessible without cars		
		Action Item 3.2.1.1: Expand MinuteVan Expand the MinuteVan shuttle system with more vehicles, more frequent service, and longer service hours. Provide more options for the disabled community. Consider making it a fixed route system. ⁴ \$\$ (operating cost)	Highest Medium-Term	Selectmen Transportation Advisory Committee
		Action Item 3.2.1.2: Coordinate MinuteVan and CoA Van Coordinate the MinuteVan and Council on Aging shuttles, and consider combining them into a single system with both fixed route and demand-responsive capabilities. ⁵	Short-Term	Selectmen
		Action Item 3.2.1.3: Coordinate shuttles with neighboring communities Consider opportunities to work with neighboring communities to expand ridership of the shuttles. ⁶	Medium-Term	Manager Department Selectmen Transportation Advisory Committee
		Action Item 3.2.1.4: Public/private funding for shuttle Explore public/private funding opportunities for the expanded shuttle system. ⁷	Medium-Term	Selectmen Transportation Advisory Committee

		Action Item 3.2.1.5: Increase resident use of commuter rail Increase the number of Acton residents who use the commuter rail system. ⁸ See Also: Consider ways to increase the amount of parking at the train station.	New Sustained Effort	Planning Department Transportation Advisory Committee
		Action Item 3.2.1.6: Consider ways to increase the amount of parking at the train station	2 nd Highest Medium-Term	Transportation Advisory Committee
		Strategy 3.2.2: Improve traffic circulation and reduce traffic impacts See Also: Organize web-based car pooling and ride sharing. Increase resident use of commuter rail		
		Action Item 3.2.2.1: Traffic and parking in centers Address local traffic circulation and parking in planning for key centers.	Short-Term	Planning Department
		Action Item 3.2.2.2: Reconfigure street layouts Consider reconfiguring specific street layouts to provide alternate routes for congested areas and/or one-way streets to improve traffic flow.	Long-Term	Planning Department Selectmen
		Action Item 3.2.2.3: Traffic calming Consider traffic calming at locations where speeds are inconsistent with residential areas and village centers. \$	Medium-Term	Engineering Department
		Action Item 3.2.2.4: Improve Business access Continue to make improvements to business access and transportation safety. \$	Ongoing	Selectmen
		Strategy 3.2.3: Work with MassDOT to improve access to and from Acton		
		Action Item 3.2.3.1: Concord Rotary improvements Work through the Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization to promote the completion of planned improvements at the Concord Rotary. ⁹	Long-Term	Selectmen
		Action Item 3.2.3.2: Improve commuter rail Work with the MBTA and surrounding communities to promote continued and improved commuter rail service.	Ongoing	Manager Department

		Action Item 3.2.3.3: Regional public transit Work through the Boston MPO to explore regional public transportation options. See Also: New Regional Transit Authority	Long-Term	Planning Department Selectmen
		Action Item 3.2.3.4: New Regional Transit Authority Work with MassDOT and surrounding communities to explore the formation of a Regional Transit Authority. See Also: Regional public transit	Long-Term	Manager Department
		Objective 3.3: Promote communication among town government, citizens, schools, and the business community.		
		Strategy 3.3.1: Promote citizen engagement in town government Promote active engagement of citizens and the transparency of town government. Improve communication and centralized information regarding existing resources and events. See Also: One-stop reservations and calendar More multilingual staff and materials		
		Action Item 3.3.1.1: Publicize town information sources Continue to disseminate information about existing Town resources and services, such as Dial-a-Ride and Social Safety Net, using the Town Website, mailings, and posters/flyers at locations such as the Senior Center, libraries, and on shuttle vehicles.	Ongoing	Memorial Library
		Action Item 3.3.1.2: Citizen's academy Encourage citizen education efforts such as the formation of an Acton Citizens Academy providing classes, information, and events, where participants (both newcomers and established residents) learn about the different functions of local government including volunteer opportunities. ¹⁰	Ongoing	Citizens and citizen groups
		Action Item 3.3.1.3: Usable video archives of key meetings Broadcast meetings of key boards (Board of Selectmen, School Committee, Finance Committee, Planning Board) and place copies of these broadcast videos on the Town website.	Ongoing	Acton TV
		Strategy 3.3.2: Attract more volunteers to help with town affairs by conducting broad-based outreach.		
		Action Item 3.3.2.1: Publicize volunteer opportunities. Use town website and other Acton media to publicize volunteer opportunities.	Short-Term 	Volunteer Coordinating Committee
		Action Item 3.3.2.2: More flexibility in volunteer opportunities Provide flexibility in scheduling/timing of volunteer opportunities and consider creating opportunities for shorter-term volunteering (single event, single task, etc).	Short-Term	Volunteer Coordinating Committee

Objective 3.4: Support and strengthen neighborhoods. See Also: Make walking and biking easier and safer Outdoor spaces near neighborhoods				
		Action Item 3.4.1: Encourage private efforts to organize neighborhoods Encourage private efforts to organize communication among neighbors and group activities. ¹¹	Short-Term	Citizens and citizen groups
		Action Item 3.4.2: Provide contact info for new residents to connect with organized neighborhood groups.	Short-Term 	Memorial Library
		Action Item 3.4.3: Encourage the business community to organize providing new residents with business information, such as provided by Welcome Wagon ^(tm) in other communities.	Short-Term	Economic Development Committee

¹ See Guidelines for Acton Sidewalk Design at <http://www.acton-ma.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=856>

² The primary purpose of these improvements is transportation rather than recreational cycling.

³ Pedestrian and bicycle accommodation includes safe walkways from the public sidewalk to building entrances and bike racks.

⁴ The system could have stops but also route deviations on either side of the fixed routes. Stops could include the train station, the schools, Kelley's Corner, West Acton Village, Acton Center, East Acton, and the proposed community center. The CoA shuttle can specialize in demand-responsive service and destinations outside Acton.

⁵ The expanded MinuteVan could become a scheduled fixed route system with limited deviations from the route in response to customer requests; the CoA shuttle is a door-to-door on-request service.

⁶ Coordination can include high traffic destinations such as the commuter rail station and Emerson Hospital.

⁷ An example is the joint funding of Lexington's Lexpress shuttle by the town and developers (including Avalon).

⁸ Ways to encourage commuter rail ridership include:

- Complete the connection of the Assabet River Rail Trail to the commuter rail station to encourage commuting by bicycle.
- Consider guiding growth to South Acton near the station (see Objective 1.1).
- Develop partnerships with local businesses to provide van shuttles to the train station.
- Facilitate car-pooling to the station.

⁹ The Boston MPO process for updating the regional transportation plan and Transportation Improvement Program is one means to increase priority for the Concord Rotary project. The project would reduce cut-through traffic caused by back-ups as well as provide the access needed for economic development.

¹⁰ The League of Women Voters has been doing education in this area for some time.

¹¹ Communication and interaction among neighbors might include email lists, Google groups, newsletters, etc. Group activities might include block parties, neighborhood books groups, walking groups, etc.

Implementation Strategies for:

GOAL 4 Provide More Opportunities for Gathering and Recreation

Goal Statement:

We value the small town feeling and appreciate the sense of community that results from frequent opportunities for interaction. We support providing places for casual social interaction and organized events that bring members of the community together. We believe in offering opportunities for inter-generational experiences and for sharing of inter-cultural celebration, and we aim to provide recreational opportunities for all ages.

Relationship to Vision

As previously mentioned, the frequency and emphasis with which Acton residents stated their desire for more opportunities to meet with one another was striking. The strategies listed under this goal outline various ways of meeting this need in outdoor and indoor spaces, formal and informal places, and for a variety of ages.

Overview of Priority Action Steps

The following were identified as priority action steps to meet this goal.

- Seek Town Meeting approval to fund the planning, siting, and design of a building that can accommodate the Senior Center and the larger community. Construct the building when Town finances permit.
- Implement the recommendations of the 2011 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). Develop a schedule to create conservation

land, maintain and improve existing public playgrounds (with priority to NARA), and create new playgrounds using both public and private funds.

- Encourage the creation of conservation lands associated with new housing development, including but not limited to situations where cluster zoning provisions are applicable.

“*Let's create a place where seniors can have private use times when the community could use the facility for other functions.*”


~ Acton Resident

GOAL 4 Provide More Opportunities for Gathering and Recreation cont.

Youth Art Contest Winner: Joy Wang




“The nature of Acton is well protected. People and animals live in harmony. The beautiful environment attracts more people and more animals to live in Acton.”

Goal 4: Provide More Opportunities for Community Gathering and Recreation				
Objective 4.1: Create new gathering spaces and make better use of existing ones. See Also: New Restaurants			Priority/Timing	Owner
		Strategy 4.1.1: Create a building that can accommodate the senior center and the larger community. See Also: Universal Design / Town facilities Explore ideas for accommodating preschool children		
		Action Item 4.1.1.1: Design and Build a community/senior center Fund the design of a facility that can serve both as a senior center and for other community center needs. Include representation from Council on Aging, the Recreation Commission and other potential users of the building to develop a space program, operating budget, and architectural design for the facility, and investigate potential funding sources to supplement Town funds. ¹ Construct the building when town finances permit. See Also: Explore regionalization opportunities \$\$	Highest Medium-Term	Council on Aging Recreation Commission Recreation Department Selectmen
		Strategy 4.1.2: Facilities for pre-school children and parents Create and/or make available indoor and outdoor facilities for use by families with young children.		
		Action Item 4.1.2.1: Explore ideas for accommodating preschool children Explore accommodating the needs of families with young children in existing and/or new Town buildings, e.g., re-use of the existing Senior Center and scheduling space in schools and a new Senior Center. See Also: Evaluate underused buildings	2 nd Highest Short-Term	Recreation Commission Recreation Department
		Strategy 4.1.3: Encourage use of existing and new gathering spaces See Also: Evaluate underused buildings		
		Action Item 4.1.3.1: One-stop reservations and calendar Create a ‘one stop’ mechanism for viewing a calendar and reserving meeting spaces in either town or school facilities. ²	Highest Short-Term 	Information Technology Department
		Strategy 4.1.4: Outdoor areas for gathering in centers Create parks and informal outdoor gathering places in key centers, and encourage commercial opportunities for gathering. See Also: Encourage developer contributions of public space to town centers New restaurants		

Objective 4.2: Provide more playgrounds, fields for team sports, parks, and conservation lands.				
		Strategy 4.2.1: Parks and play areas. Create and maintain parks and playgrounds, and increase opportunities for active recreation for all age groups.		
		Action Item 4.2.1.1: Implement OSRP (Recreation portion) Implement the recreation recommendations of the 2011 <i>Open Space and Recreation Plan</i> (OSRP). Develop a schedule to maintain and improve existing public playgrounds (with priority to NARA), and create new playgrounds using both public and private funds. See Also: Implement OSRP (Open Space portion) \$	2 nd Highest Medium-Term	Recreation Commission Recreation Department
		Action Item 4.2.1.2: Playground for young children Improve a playground to include facilities suitable for young children. \$	Medium-Term	Recreation Commission Recreation Department
		Action Item 4.2.1.3: Improve playground and park amenities Add shade trees, benches, and other amenities at existing parks and playgrounds. \$	Medium-Term	Recreation Commission Recreation Department
		Action Item 4.2.1.4: Encourage contributions toward construction of playgrounds and/or parks in new developments. See Also: Encourage developer contributions of public space to town centers	2 nd Highest Medium-Term	Planning Board Selectmen
		Action Item 4.2.1.5: Playground Committee Consider forming a Citizens' Playground Committee and finding alternative funding sources for maintenance of playground equipment and grounds.	Short-Term	Recreation Commission
		Action Item 4.2.1.6: Make play areas accessible Ensure that parks, playgrounds, and playing fields are wheelchair accessible to the extent practicable. See Also: Support citizens with disabilities in participating fully in the life of the community \$	Medium-Term	Recreation Department

		Strategy 4.2.2: Create and maintain conservation lands See Also: Maintain sidewalk priority list		
		Action Item 4.2.2.1: Maintain conservation lands Continue the work of maintaining the Town conservation lands.	Ongoing	Land Stewardship Committee
		Action Item 4.2.2.2: New conservation lands with new development Encourage the creation of conservation lands associated with new housing development, including but not limited to situations where cluster zoning provisions are applicable.	Highest New Sustained Action	Planning Board Selectmen
		Action Item 4.2.2.3: Private and public funding mix for conservation lands Implement the recommendations of the OSRP with respect to the maintenance of conservation lands, including trails, using a combination of public funds and private fundraising. ³	Short-Term	Natural Resources Department
		Strategy 4.2.3: Increase opportunities for team sports.		
		Action Item 4.2.3.1: Ensure that playing fields are available to both youth leagues and adult leagues.	Short-Term	Recreation Department
		Action Item 4.2.3.2: Explore methods to maximize the use of existing playing fields and create new playing fields.	2 nd Highest Ongoing	Citizens and citizen groups Recreation Commission School Committees
		Action Item 4.2.4: Non-motorized access to open space Improve walking and biking access to open space resources. \$	Long-Term	Sidewalk Committee

Objective 4.3: Support additional cultural activities. See Also: Actively recruit a small-scale movie theater to locate in Acton.				
		Action Item 4.3.1: Non-commercial movie showings Create a non-commercial showing of regularly scheduled movies at one or more appropriate locations. ⁴	Medium-Term	Recreation Commission
		Action Item 4.3.2: Coordination for more multi-age activities Increase the coordination between the Acton Memorial Library, the West Acton Citizen's Library, and the Council on Aging. Continue to support programming geared to different age groups (particularly children and seniors).	Short-Term 	Memorial Library
		Action Item 4.3.3: Programs to connect those with shared interests Continue to offer a wide range of community education / recreation programs that reflect the interests of Acton residents. Promote connections among participants through shared interests.	Ongoing	Community Education Recreation Commission
		Action Item 4.3.4: Support cultural activities via publicity and space Support the efforts of the Acton Boxborough Cultural Council and private organizations to provide local opportunities and publicity for theater, concerts, dance, and multi-cultural events and celebrations. Make Acton's public venues available when appropriate and support the dissemination of information regarding these as possible (e.g. post on town website). See Also: One-stop reservations and calendar	Ongoing	
		Action Item 4.3.5: Support expanding private fundraising efforts for cultural events.	Ongoing	Acton Boxborough Cultural Council

¹ The Selectmen have established a committee to begin this process.

² The feasibility of making this system web-based should be explored. Include the library in this system.

³ Explore the use of a combination of public and private funds for maintenance of conservation land, as recommended in the OSRP.

⁴ Admission to films would have to be free to avoid the costs of commercial screening of copyrighted films.

Implementation Strategies for:

GOAL 5

Support Inclusion and Diversity

Goal Statement:

We value our diversity in all of its forms. We welcome citizens of all ages, socio-economic, cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds. We strive to foster respect and appreciation, promote interaction, and actively encourage a wide variety of individuals to live, work, and play in Acton.

Relationship to Vision

This goal relates to community-building, to taking care to include and support all segments of the population. This includes seniors, who may be on a fixed income, youth who may need infrastructure to support their increasing independence, and newcomers, some of whom may

have cultural and/or linguistic barriers to getting involved with Town activities. Consistent with the state mandate, the Town has expressed a desire to provide a range of housing options that are affordable to empty nesters wishing to downsize, Town employees, young couples, and/or others with low and moderate incomes.

Overview of Priority Action Steps

The following were identified as priority action steps to meet this goal.

- Provide more housing and transportation for seniors.
- Prepare a proactive plan to make rental and owner housing available at prices that Acton families of low and moderate income can afford and at the same time provide means to meet the 10% state goal that frees Acton from 40B development. The plan should emphasize providing this housing at small, scattered sites near walkable business and service destina-

tions, especially in proximity to village centers in a manner consistent with the planning for key centers. The plan should consider the Town's participation in desired housing development and it should consider the purchase of deed restrictions as one means to meet the state affordable housing goal.

- Create a new committee composed of liaisons from the various ethnic and other such groups in Town whose main charge will include providing information to newcomers and organizing multi-cultural activities.

“Let's provide and plan housing developments that are accessible to shopping and transportation.

~ Acton Resident

”

GOAL 5


Support Inclusion
and Diversity cont.

Youth Art Contest Winner: Carrie Yu




“My little brother plays soccer with Acton-Boxboro Youth Soccer. As in the enclosed picture, his teammates are from all different backgrounds. This is the kind of diversity in Acton, which is exemplary.”

Goal 5: Support Inclusion and Diversity			Priority/Timing	Owner
Objective 5.1: Support residents of all ages				
		Strategy 5.1.1: Support seniors Support seniors by providing easier access to housing, transportation, and connecting with the community. See Also: Incentives to keep post-school-age households in town Create a building that can accommodate the senior center and the larger community Make walking and biking easier and safer Provide more playgrounds, fields for team sports, parks, and conservation lands		
		Action Item 5.1.1.1: Housing for seniors Support the provision of housing that is appropriate to seniors (e.g. smaller units, located within walking distance of goods and services such as Kelley's Corner). See Also: Roadmap for Guiding Growth Affordable Housing Strategy	Highest Medium-Term	Planning Department
		Action Item 5.1.1.2: Provide more transportation service for seniors. \$	Highest Medium-Term	Council on Aging Transportation Advisory Committee
		Action Item 5.1.1.3: Inter-generational programs Create opportunities for inter-generational interaction and learning in a new senior center and through community programs and volunteer activities. See Also: Coordination for more multi-age activities	2 nd Highest Medium-Term	Council on Aging
		Action Item 5.1.1.4: Outreach to new seniors, especially across languages Conduct outreach to seniors (including newly arrived seniors who may speak languages other than English). See Also: More multilingual staff and materials Recruit volunteers from ethnic and language minorities	2 nd Highest Short-Term	Council on Aging
		Action Item 5.1.1.5: Senior tax abatement strategies Offer more paid part-time positions at Town Hall and tax exemptions for seniors. See Also: Incentives to keep post-school-age households in town	Medium-Term	Selectmen

		Strategy 5.1.2: Integrate Teens Integrate teens in the community by providing services, easier mobility, and activities.		
		Action Item 5.1.2.1: Continue to support services for younger Actonians at the T.J. O'Grady Skate Park and Danny's Place.	Ongoing	Recreation Department
		Action Item 5.1.2.2: Outreach to teens for planning In order to best address youth needs, conduct outreach to youth to guide them to articulate their needs, and involve them in the planning process.	2 nd Highest Short-Term	Planning Department School Committees
		Action Item 5.1.2.3: Teen activities accessible without cars Provide more activities for teenagers that are accessible without an automobile, e.g. improved walking access from the schools to Kelley's Corner and an expanded shuttle system. See Also: Public/private funding for shuttle Make walking and biking easier and safer	2 nd Highest Medium-Term	Citizens and citizen groups
		Action Item 5.1.2.4: Teen place Consider creating and/or programming a park or other gathering place that is accessible for and attractive to teens. See Also: Improve Kelley's Corner \$	Medium-Term	Recreation Commission
		Action Item 5.1.2.5: Involve teens in town governance Involve youth in town governance by providing teen part time work and volunteer opportunities in town services including creating a "student representative" to town government. Explore possibilities for providing school and/or community service credit for these activities.	2 nd Highest Short-Term 	Human Resources Department School Committees
		Strategy 5.1.3: Support the inclusion of families with young children into community life.		
		Action Item 5.1.3.1: Provide gathering places and recreational opportunities for families with young children. See Also: Create new gathering spaces and make better use of existing ones Provide more playgrounds, fields for team sports, parks, and conservation lands \$	Medium-Term	Recreation Commission

		Strategy 5.1.4: Identify how age demographics are changing community needs.		
		Action Item 5.1.4.1: Document needs of an aging population Meet with department heads to explore ways of documenting the changing needs of an aging population by recording usage of services and facilities (e.g. minuteman shuttle, parks, library, etc.) and identify ways of reaching missing demographics.	Short-Term	Planning Department
		Action Item 5.1.4.2: Identifying seniors at risk Explore the need for identifying “At Risk” seniors, living alone and/or with problems communicating with public health and safety officials.	Short-Term	Community Services Coordinator
		Objective 5.2: Support households of all income levels		
		Strategy 5.2.1: Affordable Housing Strategy Develop a comprehensive and proactive affordable housing strategy that supports the provision of a wide range of housing types including for people of limited means, and also allows Acton to make progress on the Commonwealth's affordable housing goals set forth in Chapter 40B of the General Laws. See Also: Legislation to increase local control over development		
		Action Item 5.2.1.1: Housing Plan Prepare an updated proactive plan ¹ to make additional rental and owner housing available at prices that Acton families of low and moderate income can afford and at the same time provide a means to make progress toward the 10% state requirement for affordable housing. ²³ The plan should be consistent with the planning for key centers See Also: Roadmap for Guiding Growth Housing for seniors	Highest Short-Term	Planning Department
		Action Item 5.2.1.2: Incentives for well-located affordable housing Provide incentives for the development of housing that is “affordable” (meeting state standards) and/or simply within the means of people and families with low and moderate incomes, such as empty nesters, town staff, and young families, at small scattered sites especially in proximity to village centers.	2 nd Highest Medium-Term	Planning Department
		Action Item 5.2.1.3: Purchase deed restrictions in existing housing Explore ways to continue and expand the conversion of existing below-market housing units to affordable units through purchase of deed restrictions. \$	Long-Term	Acton Community Housing Corporation

		Action Item 5.2.1.4: Allow more dividing of existing lots for economical housing In the review of Acton's zoning bylaws, support and expand the ability of residents who wish to subdivide their homes (and property) for economical housing (e.g., "in-law apartments") by increasing the number of houses that qualify under the <i>Zoning Bylaw</i> ⁴ and providing regulations that permit subdivision of a single residential lot for affordable housing purposes, subject to review of septic systems and effect on historic districts, as applicable. See Also: Review zoning in light of plan goals and buildout potential	2 nd Highest Short-Term	Health Department Planning Department
		Action Item 5.2.1.5: Housing sites with open space purchases When the Town purchases large open space parcels, consider designating a portion as an affordable housing site. ⁵ See Also: Funding of open space protection	New Sustained Action	Open Space Committee
		Strategy 5.2.2: Provide social support and economic opportunities for residents of low and moderate income. See Also: Publicize town information sources		
		Action Item 5.2.2.1: Match people in need with agencies Increase volunteer and community connections by working with the school system and the Town to identify those in need and match them with volunteers and agencies.	Short-Term	Community Services Coordinator
		Action Item 5.2.2.2: Support agencies serving residents in need Continue to support agencies working to serve the needs of the Town's low and moderate income residents.	Ongoing	Selectmen
Objective 5.3: Embrace cultural diversity				
		Strategy 5.3.1: Support diverse cultures within Acton and welcome new residents of all ethnicities. See Also: Citizen's academy		
		Action Item 5.3.1.1: Town space for cultural activities Continue to support and provide Town space for cultural activities and celebrations.	2 nd Highest Ongoing	Municipal Properties School Committees
		Action Item 5.3.1.2: Acknowledge more holidays Support the recognition of cultural holidays town-wide (including by noting these on the town web site and supporting their recognition in the schools) and consider holding an annual Acton Multi-Cultural Celebrations Day.	Short-Term	School Committees Selectmen

		Action Item 5.3.1.3: Consider establishing a Diversity Awareness Day with diversity training materials and programs.	Short-Term	School Committees Selectmen
		Action Item 5.3.1.4: More multilingual staff and materials Consider hiring and providing multilingual staff and materials at Town facilities. Provide signs, website, and written information in multiple languages. See Also: Extend multi-language support	Long-Term	Manager Department
		Action Item 5.3.1.5: Include non-citizen residents in town affairs Encourage non-citizen residents to serve on town boards where possible	Long-Term	Selectmen
		Action Item 5.3.1.6: Recruit volunteers from ethnic and language minorities Create a new committee composed of liaisons from the various ethnic and language groups in town whose main charge will include providing information to newcomers and organizing multi-cultural activities. This will help build bridges, knitting the community closer together, and it will provide guidance to those unfamiliar with the town and its resources.	Short-Term 	Selectmen
		Action Item 5.3.1.7: Expand language offerings Explore whether the schools think it is feasible to expand foreign language options to include Portuguese, Russian, and the Indian languages, as well as the current Chinese language offerings.	Medium-Term	School Committees
		Strategy 5.3.2: Identify how cultural demographics are changing community needs.		
		Action Item 5.3.2.1: Extend multi-language support Explore the need and feasibility of implementing actions such as: having the Police Department subscribe to AT&T's translation service, translating key portions of the Town's website especially pages dealing with regulations, services and emergency announcements, etc. See Also: More multilingual staff and materials	Medium-Term	Manager Department
		Action Item 5.3.2.2: Focus groups to improve outreach Conduct follow up focus groups with the goal of identifying ways of broadening the participation of residents from all segments of Acton's population.	Short-Term	Planning Department
		Action Item 5.3.2.3: Document the changing needs of a multicultural population Meet with Town Department Heads to identify ways in which demographic changes (specifically cultural and linguistic) may have affected community needs and the provision of services.	Short-Term	Manager Department

Objective 5.4: Support citizens with disabilities in participating fully in the life of the community.				
		Action Item 5.4.1: Universal Design / Town facilities Consider Universal Design principles at new Town facilities and in development guidelines and review to provide physical access benefits to all. ⁶ See Also: Make play areas accessible Create a building that can accommodate the senior center and the larger community	2 nd Highest Long-Term	Municipal Properties
		Action Item 5.4.2: Universal Design / Housing Encourage the use of Universal Design principles in both affordable and market housing through development guidelines and review.	Short-Term	Planning Department
		Action Item 5.4.3: ADA Transition Plan Update the Town's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan, including identification of priorities for corrective action.	Medium-Term	Municipal Properties
		Action Item 5.4.4: Employment information for the disabled Support and provide information on job training and career counseling opportunities for disabled individuals.	Short-Term	Commission on Disabilities
		Action Item 5.4.5: Expanding access to team sports Work with the Recreation Commission to create opportunities for participation in team sports by people with disabilities. ⁷ See Also: Make play areas accessible	Medium-Term	Commission on Disabilities

¹ The Town's last housing plan is here: <https://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/View/Collection-2277>

² The Commonwealth allows for greater local control over affordable housing projects when a threshold of 10% of deeded affordable housing is achieved, or when significant progress is made in a given year. These thresholds are generally difficult for Acton to achieve, but achieving them is very helpful for the town's goals, if they can be achieved without significantly risking the general land use strategy of this plan.

³ The housing plan should explore the potential of forming a partnership with a regional non-profit development entity.

⁴ Zoning Bylaws: <http://www.acton-ma.gov/DocumentView.aspx?DID=659>

⁵ Adding affordable housing to an open space purchase plan also helps fund the open space purchase.

⁶ Universal Design refers to design principles that accommodate people with and without disabilities in the same way, e.g., curb ramps that provide access for strollers and shopping carts as well as wheelchairs. All new Town facilities and alterations must comply with ADA Accessibility Guidelines.

⁷ The Town is working to install a "Field of Dreams" athletic field that will support leagues focused on serving youth with disabilities.

Implementation Strategies for:

GOAL 6

Preserve and Enhance Town-owned Assets & Services

Goal Statement:

We value our Town assets and wish to preserve and enhance them. These include our open spaces, schools, municipal properties and facilities.

Relationship to Vision

The strategies listed under this goal relate to a sense of responsibility to maintain, protect and improve Town assets, including Acton's excellent schools, Town-owned buildings and recreational facilities. It also relates to ways of updating the provision of Town services through the use of technology and maximizing the efficiency of providing services by exploring regional opportunities.

Overview of Priority Action Steps

- Conserve existing farming on Town-owned land and support new and expanded agricultural activity and uses.
- Continue to keep the school system up to date and achieve academic excellence, using standards and best practices as they are developed.
- Form a technology committee to explore ways to better leverage technology, both in the schools and in the municipality to reduce costs and improve services.
- Explore ways in which Town Hall can use current technology to communicate and disseminate information and provide services, including:
 - Updating the contents, aesthetics and access of the town website. (See also Objective 3.3 and 4.3)
 - Expand payment notifications for taxes and other bills online for residents, thus making

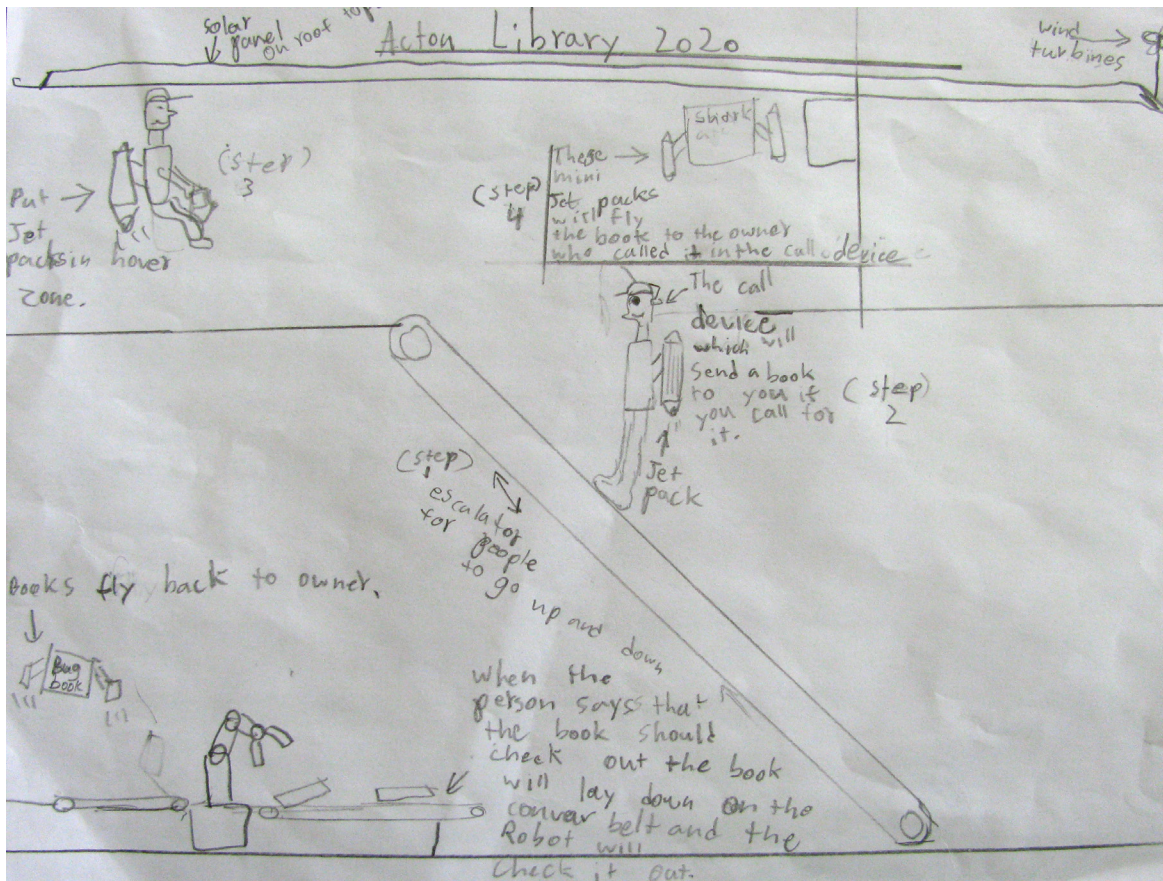
- the transactions easier for residents and also cutting down costs of labor and materials.
- Making the permitting process simpler by establishing online application forms and database, and converting all files into digital records.

“Great schools keep property values high. We should invest what is needed to stay at the top and allocate the rest to other priorities.”

~ Acton Resident

GOAL 6 Preserve and Enhance Town-owned Assets & Services cont.

Youth Art Contest Winner: Jyo Pari





“ I sketched a picture of the Acton Library in 2020. I want to find books and check out books faster without much human interventions. ”

Goal 6: Preserve and Enhance Town-owned Assets & Services			Priority/Timing	Owner
Objective 6.1: Protect Town-owned open space				
See Also: Recognize waterbodies as part of Acton's heritage				
Strategy 6.1.1: Support the implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan. See Also: Implement OSRP (Open Space portion) Implement OSRP (Recreation portion)				
		Action Item 6.1.1.1: Preserve and acquire open space Protect and increase Town-owned open space by applying a range of preservation and acquisition measures, e.g., purchase of conservation restrictions or use of Transfer of Development Rights zoning. See Also: Other tools for protecting open space	2 nd Highest Ongoing	Citizens and citizen groups Open Space Committee Planning Department
Strategy 6.1.2: Preserve farmland and conservation land with agricultural and forestry uses. Set up an Agricultural Commission				
		Action Item 6.1.2.1: Conserve farming on town-owned land Conserve existing farming on town-owned land and support new and expanded agricultural activity and uses. ¹ See Also: Support the Morrison Farm plan	Short-Term	Natural Resources Department Open Space Committee
		Action Item 6.1.2.2: Forestry Management Plan Support the Conservation Commission's efforts to develop a Forestry Management Plan.	Ongoing	Natural Resources Department

Objective 6.2: Support excellence in schools				
		Strategy 6.2.1: Ensure that school facilities are well-maintained and updated. See Also: Fiscal balance between town and schools		
		Action Item 6.2.1.1: Minuteman renovation Work with other participating districts to renovate the Minuteman Career and Technical High School.	Medium-Term	School Committees Selectmen
		Action Item 6.2.1.2: Support existing efforts to explore regionalization opportunities in the K-6 grades.	2 nd Highest	School Committees
		Strategy 6.2.2: High educational standards Continue to support and achieve the high educational standards of Acton's schools, including the Minuteman Career and Technical High School, a regional school that serves Acton. See Also: Minuteman renovation		
		Action Item 6.2.2.1: Support the schools' Long Range Strategic Plan Continue to keep Acton's school systems up to date and achieve academic excellence, using standards and best practices as included in the Long Range Strategic Plan.	Highest	School Committees
		Action Item 6.2.2.2: Volunteers for schools Continue to develop an active volunteer community to improve and maintain excellence in school activities.	Ongoing	School Committees
		Action Item 6.2.2.3: Enhance community education programs Enhance community education programs ensuring they meet the needs and desires of Acton residents. See Also: Programs to connect those with shared interests	2 nd Highest	Community Education

Objective 6.3: Manage the Town's facilities efficiently				
		Strategy 6.3.1: Review and manage Town facilities in a manner that is pro-active and cost effective. Continue to explore the most efficient and environmentally sensitive ways to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan with respect to Acton's sewer system. See Also: Energy retrofits on public buildings One-stop reservations and calendar ADA Transition Plan Transfer Station waste reduction Create a building that can accommodate the senior center and the larger community Support citizens with disabilities in participating fully in the life of the community. Monitor groundwater quantity and quality		
		Action Item 6.3.1.1: Preventive maintenance of buildings and grounds Continue to apply preventive maintenance measures in order to extend the life of municipal and school buildings and grounds, and to ensure that they fully support the activities they house.	2 nd Highest	Municipal Properties School Committees
		Action Item 6.3.1.2: Evaluate underused buildings Evaluate the condition and use of all buildings owned by the Town (including schools) to determine their most effective use. Identify appropriate reuse for potentially surplus facilities and determine whether or not it is more cost-efficient to sell, lease, mothball or demolish. Evaluate the possibility of any of these buildings becoming effective public gathering spaces.	2 nd Highest	Municipal Properties School Committees
		Action Item 6.3.1.3: Implement the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan Continue to explore the most efficient and environmentally sensitive ways to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan with respect to Acton's sewer system. See Also: West Acton Village sewers Advanced package wastewater treatment	2 nd Highest	Health Department
		Action Item 6.3.1.4: Manage, preserve, and replace Acton's street trees. See Also: Plant and protect large trees	Ongoing	Tree Warden

Objective 6.4: Provide high quality services that are responsive to community needs.				
See Also: Continue to support services for younger Actonians at the T.J. O'Grady Skate Park and Danny's Place. Nursing Service One-stop reservations and calendar Be more business friendly Coordination for more multi-age activities Parks and play areas.				
Strategy 6.4.1: Explore ways of using technology to enhance the provision of Town services See Also: Explore regionalization opportunities Coordination for more multi-age activities				
		Action Item 6.4.1.1: Technology for delivering services Explore ways in which Town government can use current technology to communicate and disseminate information and provide services, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating the contents, aesthetics and access of the town website. • Setting up payment notifications for taxes and other bills online for residents, thus making the transactions easier for residents and also cut down costs of labor and materials. • Making the permitting process simpler by establishing online application forms, database and converting all files into digital records. See Also: One-stop reservations and calendar Streamline business permitting	Highest	Information Technology Department
		Action Item 6.4.1.2: Form a technology committee Form a committee to explore ways to better leverage technology both in the schools and in the municipality to reduce costs and improve services.	Highest 	Selectmen
		Action Item 6.4.1.3: Coordinate Library Services and Community Education Increase the coordination between the Acton Memorial Library, the West Acton Citizen's Library, and the Council on Aging, and Community Education. Continue to support programming geared to different age groups (particularly children and seniors).	Short-Term 	Memorial Library

Objective 6.5: Provide excellent public health and safety services				
See Also: Explore regionalization opportunities				
Strategy 6.5.1: Ensure that public health and safety services respond to demographic and other changes.				
		Action Item 6.5.1.1: Explore efficiencies for public safety Determine the most effective way to deliver public safety services (including dispatch) quickly and efficiently as the Town grows and its distribution changes.	Highest	Fire Department Police
		Action Item 6.5.1.2: Public Safety staffing levels Continue to monitor the staffing levels of the police and fire departments and adjust appropriately as the population increases and ages.	Ongoing	Manager Department
		Action Item 6.5.1.3: Nursing Service Evaluate the Acton Nursing Service to determine the most appropriate way of delivering this service, in light of an aging population.	Short-Term	Manager Department

¹ Consider the creation of an agricultural commission.

Implementation Strategies for:

GOAL 7

Maintain and Improve the Town's Financial Well-being

Goal Statement:

We believe it is critical for us to sustain and strengthen our Town's financial well-being. This includes commercial and economic development that reflects the long-term goals of both businesses and residents of the community. This also includes promoting vigilance in controlling Town expenses and continual evaluation of the balance between reasonable taxation and providing quality Town services.

Overview of Priority Action Steps

- Do more to promote economic development to enhance the commercial tax base in order to reduce the residential portion of the tax levy.
- Actively promote employment-oriented development (e.g., high tech/R&D offices) in targeted areas.
- Continue planning to cover long term obligations such as retiree health insurance and life insurance.
- Explore regionalization opportunities to cut costs in service delivery, particularly police and fire dispatch services and services such as a community center, housing authority, inspectional services, veteran's services, and nursing.
- Improve and streamline the business permitting process, including implementing permit tracking software.
- Consider incentives to encourage seniors and empty-nesters to stay in Acton such as tax relief, preference in hiring for part time jobs with the Town, an adequate supply of smaller housing, and a new senior center.

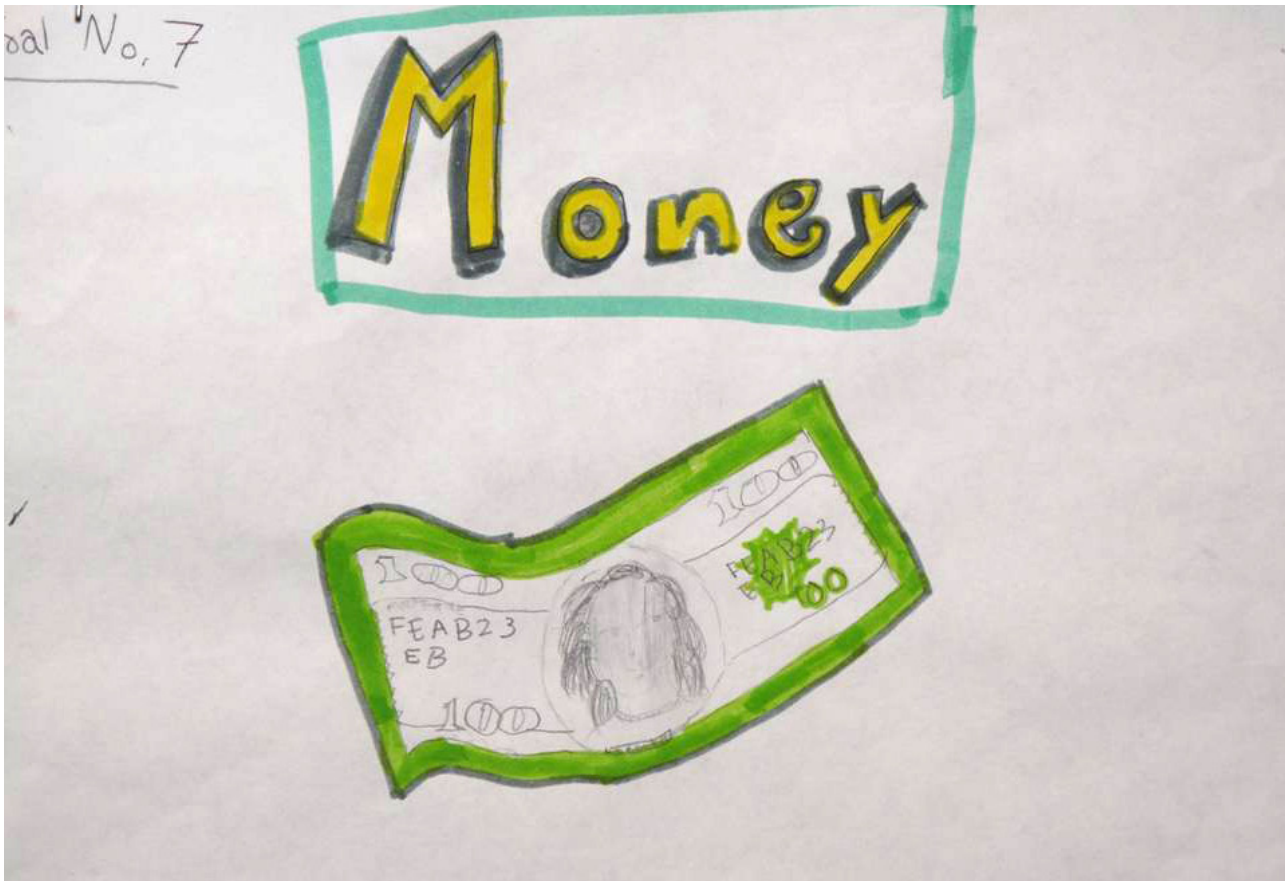
Ongoing Activities

- Support ongoing efforts to balance the financial requirements of the school system and other Town resources.
- Accelerate the process of long-range planning for major capital expenditures such as remodeling Town or school facilities or constructing new buildings.
- Continue to scrutinize all budget items to ensure Town services are a "good deal" for taxes paid.
- Continue the strategy of supplementing current revenues with sources other than the property tax, e.g., grants and fees.
- Continue to enhance the level of services that the Town can provide with existing resources through the evaluation of priorities and by incorporating improvements in technology.
- Continue to seek federal, state, and private funding sources to supplement Town funds.


GOAL





Maintain and Improve the
Town's Financial Well-being cont.


Youth Art Contest Winner: Gretel Busse





“\$100 bill with “money”
written at the top”

Goal 7: Maintain and Improve Financial Well-being of the Town			Priority/Timing	Owner
		Objective 7.1: Promote fiscal responsibility		
		Strategy 7.1.1: Actively manage Town finances to avoid an undue tax burden on residential property		
		Action Item 7.1.1.1: Enhance commercial tax base Do more to promote economic development to enhance the commercial tax base in order to reduce the residential portion of the tax levy. See Also: Promote economic development that supports other Acton 2020 planning goals Improve existing commercial areas	Highest Ongoing	Economic Development Committee
		Action Item 7.1.1.2: Encourage empty nesters to stay in Acton Continue to develop policies that encourage empty nesters and seniors to stay in Acton in order to increase the taxpayer/student ratio. ¹ See Also: Create a building that can accommodate the senior center and the larger community Support seniors Support the financial ability of all residents to stay in Acton for a lifetime Housing for seniors Incentives to keep post-school-age households in town	Highest Ongoing	Council on Aging
		Action Item 7.1.1.3: Fiscal balance between town and schools As enrollments decline in Acton schools, continue the work of the Acton Leadership Group to allocate increased fiscal capacity in an appropriate balance between educational improvements and other priorities of the town.	2 nd Highest Ongoing	Finance Committee School Committees Selectmen
		Action Item 7.1.1.4: Complete Long-range Capital Plan Improve the process of long-range planning for major capital expenditures such as remodeling town or school facilities or constructing new buildings. ²	2 nd Highest Ongoing 	Finance Committee Manager Department
		Action Item 7.1.1.5: Planning for long term obligations Continue planning to cover long term obligations such as retiree health insurance and life insurance.	Highest Ongoing	Manager Department

		Action Item 7.1.1.6: Ensure financially efficient town services Continue to scrutinize all budget items to ensure town services are a "good deal" for taxes paid. See Also: Explore other sources of funding town services	Ongoing 	Manager Department School Committees
		Action Item 7.1.1.7: Supplement revenues with grants, fees, etc. Continue to seek federal, state, and private funding sources, including grants and fees, in order to supplement current revenues with sources other than the property tax. ³ See Also: Create a grants and funding clearinghouse Leverage Green Communities grants Private and public funding mix for conservation lands Public/private funding for shuttle Support expanding private fundraising efforts for cultural events.	Ongoing 	Manager Department
		Action Item 7.1.1.8: Consider utilizing public-private partnerships Consider utilizing public-private partnerships in order to fund large capital and other expense items	2 nd Highest Ongoing	Finance Department
		Action Item 7.1.1.9: Explore other sources of funding town services Explore ways of using federal, state, and private funding sources to supplement Town funds in providing town services See Also: Supplement revenues with grants, fees, etc. Create a grants and funding clearinghouse Leverage Green Communities grants Manage the Town's facilities efficiently Explore efficiencies for public safety Financially efficient town services	Ongoing 	Manager Department
		Strategy 7.1.2: Continuously improve the efficiency and performance of Town services. See Also: Form a technology committee		
		Action Item 7.1.2.1: Explore regionalization opportunities Explore regionalization opportunities to cut costs in service delivery, particularly police and fire dispatch services and services such as a community center, housing authority, inspectional services, veteran's services, and nursing. See Also: Regional cooperation on development issues New Regional Transit Authority Regional hazardous waste days Support existing efforts to explore regionalization opportunities in the K-6 grades.	Highest Short-Term 	Manager Department

		Action Item 7.1.2.2: Create a grants and funding clearinghouse Create a clearinghouse within the Town IT system for sharing grant and funding opportunities among Town departments and committees.	Short-Term 	Information Technology Department
		Strategy 7.1.3: Consider fiscal impacts of new development when amending the Zoning Bylaw and reviewing special permit applications.	Ongoing	
		Action Item 7.1.3.1: Ensure Zoning takes in to account the impact of new development. On an ongoing basis, ensure that all zoning is coordinated with and takes into account the impact of new development on town services, facilities and infrastructure. See Also: Review zoning in light of plan goals and buildout potential Zoning to support Key Centers Plan	2 nd Highest Ongoing	Planning Department
		Action Item 7.1.3.2: Impact fees Consider supporting legislation that would enable Massachusetts towns to charge impact fees on new development.	Long-Term	Selectmen
Objective 7.2: Promote economic development that supports other Acton 2020 planning goals				
		Strategy 7.2.1: Recruit and retain businesses Increase the Town's fiscal capacity to implement all goals by proactively recruiting new businesses and retaining existing ones throughout the Town. See Also: Planning staff Enhance Village Centers Improve Kelley's Corner West Acton Village sewers Be more business friendly Zoning to support Key Centers Plan		
		Action Item 7.2.1.1: Employment-oriented development Actively promote employment-oriented development (e.g., high tech/R&D offices) in targeted areas. ⁴	Highest New Sustained Action	Economic Development Committee
		Action Item 7.2.1.2: Actively recruit a small-scale movie theater to locate in Acton. See Also: Non-commercial movie showings	2 nd Highest Medium-Term	Economic Development Officer

		Action Item 7.2.1.3: New restaurants Actively recruit restaurants to increase their number and variety. ⁵	2 nd Highest New Sustained Action	Economic Development Officer
		Action Item 7.2.1.4: Balance regulatory burden between public benefits and business needs Work to better balance regulatory burden between public benefits and business needs, so that businesses can thrive in Acton. See Also: Simplify sign bylaw Streamline business permitting	2 nd Highest Ongoing 	Economic Development Officer
		Action Item 7.2.1.5: Develop a “Buy Local” campaign Promote a Buy Local campaign for Acton businesses.	Short-Term 	Economic Development Officer
		Action Item 7.2.1.6: Develop and maintain good relationships with existing businesses Develop and maintain good relationships with existing businesses See Also: Be more business friendly Promote communication among town government, citizens, schools, and the business community.	Ongoing	Economic Development Officer
		Action Item 7.2.1.7: Encourage “Solo-preneurs” Support “solo-preneurs” and other local small businesses through a variety of measures aimed at helping them to conduct business in Acton; these could include encouraging restaurants to provide “conference room space” for use by solo practitioners working out of their homes, and also by promoting the sharing of office space and support services.	New Sustained Action	Economic Development Officer
Objective 7.3: Improve existing commercial areas				
		Strategy 7.3.1: Be more business friendly See Also: Encourage the growth of local businesses that can provide local shopping opportunities and employment. Recruit and retain businesses		
		Action Item 7.3.1.1: Simplify sign bylaw Rewrite and simplify the sign bylaw to increase flexibility of standards while continuing to protect aesthetics.	Short-Term	Planning Department
		Action Item 7.3.1.2: Streamline business permitting Improve and streamline the business permitting process, including implementing permit tracking software. See Also: Technology for delivering services	Highest Short-Term	Manager Department

		Strategy 7.3.2: Improve the aesthetics of shopping areas See Also: Simplify sign bylaw Preserve and enhance key centers.		
		Action Item 7.3.2.1: Work with property owners to make improvements to existing commercial areas. See Also: Recruit and retain businesses	New Sustained Action	Economic Development Committee
		Objective 7.4: Support the financial ability of all residents to stay in Acton for a lifetime		
		See Also: Housing for seniors Support seniors Affordable Housing Strategy Actively manage Town finances to avoid an undue tax burden on residential property		
		Action Item 7.4.1: Incentives to keep post-school-age households in town Consider incentives to encourage seniors and empty-nesters to stay in Acton such as tax relief, preference in hiring for part time jobs with the Town, an adequate supply of smaller housing, and a new Senior Center. In Acton, households without school-age children generally pay more in taxes than they receive in services, so it can be financially advantageous for the town to encourage these households to stay. Also, when households spend more years in Acton, the web of connections between people within town is strengthened (Goal 3) See Also: Senior tax abatement strategies Housing for seniors Support seniors Encourage empty nesters to stay in Acton Improve Connections	Highest Medium-Term	Selectmen
		Action Item 7.4.2: Natural gas extension Advocate for extensions of natural gas lines where this would provide options for homeowners to switch away from oil or electric heat. This will save money for homeowners. ⁶	Medium-Term	Selectmen

¹ Acton currently has a relatively high ratio of students to its total population, which results in a relatively high proportion of taxes needed to support the school.

² Capital investment items in this implementation plan are the first items in this list: <http://implementation.acton2020.info/action-item-s...>

³ Currently, each department and committee does this on their own

⁴ Targeted areas for commercial development include Great Road, Nagog Park, Powdermill, and large commercial parcels on Rt. 2.

⁵ Desired restaurants include mid-level, family, casual, and additional ethnic restaurants. Encourage outdoor seating where appropriate.

⁶ This may or may not represent a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions - this depends on the source of the natural gas, the heating source being displaced, and any leaks in the natural gas distribution system